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## THE RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF JOWETT.

THE following selections from the writings of the late Master of Balliol were originally prepared for a lecture to the elder students at the Jewish Theological Training College of London. The material proved too large for the limits of a lecture, but I hope that it may prove of interest and value to many a reader, whether Christian or Jew. I have throughout left the Master to speak for himself, and have given to his words the very minimum of commentary. Nor have I attempted to sum up or analyse his matured religious position. I will only say a few words by way of introduction, so as to explain the method and the limits of this selection.

Jowett's teaching was notoriously and even increasingly unsystematic. During the last thirty years of his life—that is, through the period of his ripest maturity—he published no definitely religious work. Since his death two volumes of his *Sermons* have been given to the world. A third volume, which from the theological point of view will be the most important of the three—it is to be called *Doctrinal Sermons*—is announced as “in preparation.” Hence this *florilegium* ought properly speaking to have been postponed. If it is ever republished as a book, it will probably require enlargement and amplification.

In many letters to intimate friends, and in numerous note-books, from both of which sources selections have been made in his *Life*, there frequently occur deeply interesting passages about religion and theology. Upon these materials I have freely drawn; but a word of caution is perhaps necessary concerning them. In a sermon a preacher is sometimes tempted to say more than he believes; in a letter, or even in a reflection written down in a moment of depression, he may possibly say less. Jowett was probably never guilty of the excess: perhaps he may once or twice be found to illustrate the defect. At any rate a casual phrase of which the bearing may be quite clear to an intimate friend, or a one-sided sentence which was never meant for publication, and the limited or partial truth of which is perfectly well known to the writer, may, if rashly used, give a false impression of a man's religious teaching taken as a whole.

In spite of the fact that during the thirty years of his maturity

Jowett published no book on religion, the material is tolerably large. The *Sermons* and the *Plato* contain innumerable passages one would wish to quote. As a selection had to be made from these I have naturally given most space to subjects which would presumably be of greater interest to my Jewish readers. But I have not, I hope, in the smallest degree desired to show the Master as other than he was, or veiled the depth of his devotion to the teaching and to the life of Christ. Again, I have said little or nothing about the gradual development of his religious position. Hence the paradox that I shall quote least from his one professedly theological work, the *Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul*. The first edition of that book appeared in 1855 (when Jowett was thirty-eight years old), and the second edition in 1859. The religious and theological essays appended to the *Commentary* contain some of Jowett's finest writing, and are replete with wisdom and with piety. But paradoxical though it be, I shall not quote very largely from them here, partly because they deal to a great extent with technical questions of Christian theology, and partly because they do not represent the ripest and maturest views of their author. The bulk of my quotations are taken from Jowett's books, or sermons, or letters, or notes written while he was Master of Balliol, that is, in the last twenty-three years of his life, while he was in the full maturity of his peculiar powers (1870-1893). I shall mainly use the book on St. Paul and the famous contribution to *Essays and Reviews* to confirm and supplement what he spoke and wrote during that later period.

It is perhaps desirable to recall a few dates and facts. Jowett was born in 1817, and his first religious influences were strongly Protestant and Evangelical. He won the Balliol scholarship in 1835, and was elected to a fellowship in 1838 while still an undergraduate. His whole subsequent life was passed as tutor and then as Master of Balliol College. He took orders in 1842 when he was twenty-five years old. He saw the rise and development of the whole Tractarian movement. In his friendship with Stanley he could mark the influence and read the teaching of Arnold. He learnt German, and became an earnest student of German philosophy, especially of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel. He witnessed the rise of historical criticism as regards the Bible; he lived through the theological agitations which accompanied the early teaching of Darwin. What changes and excitements and alarms had passed over the religious world of England between the year 1840 (when Jowett was twenty-three) and 1870, when at fifty-three he became Master of Balliol. And yet, as Jowett held more and more strongly, God and religion remained precisely where they were before, where in truth they had always been and must

always be. On the basis of his early upbringing and environment, and with the help of all he witnessed and learnt in later years, Jowett was gradually feeling his way to a phase of Christian Theism, which his own words will best describe.

But two points about it may be mentioned beforehand.

It was a Christian Theism. Nevertheless it partly belonged to a sphere where the purer Judaism and the purer Christianity fade into each other, where the accuracy of labels becomes doubtful, and differences merge into a higher and more catholic unity. The Master would have smiled if I had ventured to tell him that his teaching was Jewish, but I think he would not have been wholly displeased. To agree about the essentials of religion, he would have said, is far more important than to agree by what names we shall call them.

Secondly, it was a simple Theism. But it was simplicity with a difference. It was the simplicity which, so to speak, lies on the other side of complexity. It was the result of thought. It was profound. It was not the simplicity of negation. It was the unessential which (to his mind) had been eliminated; the essential remained. This essential was large and living. No man more than Jowett lived by his religion. It was simple, then, not in its weakness, but in its strength; not in its vagueness, but in its clarity; not in its remoteness from life, but in its direct appeal to the heart, to the mind, and to the will.

The positive side of the Master's teaching is, I think, too little known and appreciated. He was often misunderstood. Few people heard him preach: for many years, when the clamour about his unorthodoxy was at its highest, he seldom preached at all. His supposed scepticism clung about him; the memory of *Essays and Reviews* lived long. People spoke of his practical sagacity; he was the incarnation of "common sense"; he appreciated success; as to his religion, it was a mixture of broadness and doubt. The intense piety of the man, his deep religious fervour, his unshakable faith in the divine, escaped notice. Yet these were the greatest realities of his nature and character; they went to make him what he was. It was just their combination with what is too rashly called scepticism, with "broadness," with common sense, with amazing practical sagacity and omnivorous interest in the actual facts of life, which made them, to those who knew him well, the more fascinating and the more remarkable, which gave them their power to influence and to control, so that in spite of difficulties, moral, religious, or intellectual, many as well as himself remained firm believers in the divine authorship of the world and of the human mind<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 439, ad fin.



Let us consider these striking combinations in his character and teaching a little longer. First then as regards his scepticism. How far did this extend? and what, if I may say so, was its dominating purpose and object? His great aim was to get religion put upon a firm footing, so that it might be a power and reality to the educated as well as to the uneducated, to those who are responsive to the modern spirit as well as to those who are impervious to its influences. Hence religion must not conflict with the conclusions of science or of history. In other words it must not depend on miracles or on the verbal accuracy of an ancient narrative; it must see God in law and not in odd suspensions of law; it must be rooted in morality and in truth. The object of Jowett's scepticism, so far as it is part of his teaching, was to detach religion from what is uncertain, transitory, and inaccurate in order to rivet it to what is sure, permanent, and true. Religion must as it were keep pace with and even be improved by every assured advance in science, in history, and in criticism. These things, so far from making religion feebler, should make it purer, nobler, stronger.

From this point of view let us hear some of his remarks upon religion and science.

Already in the first edition of the *Epistles of St. Paul* he had said :

"Past and present strive together in our minds; the modes of thought which we have derived from Scripture and from antiquity are at variance with the language of science. It is our duty as Christians and as reasonable beings to lay aside such illusions. Language and religious feeling supply many blinds which we may interpose between ourselves and truth. But there is no resting-place until we admit freely that the laws of nature and the will of the God of nature are absolutely identical<sup>1</sup>."

And again he says in a fine passage, which is almost the same in both editions of the book on St. Paul :

"The more we take out of the category of chance in the world either of nature or of mind, the more present evidence we have of the faithfulness of God. We do not need to have a chapter of accidents in life to enable us to realize the existence of a personal God, as though events which we can account for were not equally his work. Let not use or custom so prevail in our minds as to make this higher notion of God cheerless or uncomfortable to us. The rays of his presence may still warm us, as well as enlighten us. Surely he, in whom we live and move and have our being, is nearer to us than he would be if he interfered occasionally for our benefit.

"The curtain of the physical world is closing in upon us': what does this mean but that the arms of his intelligence are embracing us

<sup>1</sup> *St. Paul*, II, p. 413 (ed. 1).

on every side? We have no more fear of nature; for our knowledge of the laws of nature has cast out fear. We know him as he shows himself in them, even as we are known of him. Do we think to draw near to God by returning to that state in which nature seemed to be without law, when man cowered like the animals before the storm, and in the meteors of the skies and the motions of the heavenly bodies sought to read the purposes of God respecting himself? Or shall we rest in that stage of the knowledge of nature which was common to the heathen philosophers and to the Fathers of the Christian Church? or in that of two hundred years ago, ere the laws of the heavenly bodies were discovered? or of fifty years ago, before geology had established its truths on sure foundations? or of thirty years ago, ere the investigation of old language had revealed the earlier stages of the history of the human mind? At which of these resting-places shall we pause to renew the covenant between Reason and Faith? Rather at none of them, if the first condition of a true faith be the belief in all true knowledge<sup>1</sup>."

Jowett was well aware that the precise form which the relations of religion and science to each other will assume cannot be foretold from age to age. But he never doubted but that religion would hold its own with science, or that God would provide a way, as he picturesquely puts it, whereby the thought of him shall never be banished from the hearts of men. It is very interesting to find him in 1855 and 1859 writing in the following, as has been said, almost prophetic strain (*The Origin of Species* was published in 1859):

"No one who, instead of hanging to the past, will look forward to the future, can expect that natural science should stand in the same attitude towards revelation fifty years hence as at present. The faith of mankind varies from age to age; it is weaker, or it may be stronger, at one time than at another. But that which never varies or turns aside, which is always going on and cannot be driven back, is knowledge based on the sure ground of observation and experiment, the regular progress of which is itself matter of observation. The stage at which the few have arrived is already far in advance of the many, and if there were nothing remaining to be discovered, still the diffusion of the knowledge that we have, without new addition, would exert a great influence on religious and social life. Still greater is the indirect influence which science exercises through the medium of the arts. In one century a single invention has changed the face of Europe; three or four such inventions might produce a gulf between us and the future far greater than the interval which separates ancient from modern civilization. Doubtless God has provided a way that the thought of him should not be banished from the hearts of men. And habit, and opinion, and prescription may 'last our time,' and many motives may conspire to keep our minds off the coming change. But if ever our present

<sup>1</sup> *St. Pau'*, II, p. 484 (ed. 2).

knowledge of geology, of languages, of the races and religions of mankind, of the human frame itself, shall be regarded as the starting-point of a goal which has been almost reached, supposing too the progress of science to be accompanied by a corresponding development of the mechanical arts, we can hardly anticipate, from what we already see, the new relation that will then arise between reason and faith. Perhaps the very opposition between them may have died away. At any rate experience shows that religion is not stationary when all other things are moving onward.

"Changes of this kind pass gradually over the world ; the mind of man is not suddenly thrown into a state for which it is unprepared. No one has more doubts than he can carry ; the way of life is not found to stop and come to an end in the midst of a volcano, or on the edge of a precipice. Dangers occur, not from the disclosure of any new, or hitherto unobserved, facts, for which, as for all other blessings, we have reason to be thankful to God ; but from our concealment or denial of them, from the belief that we can make them other than they are ; from the fancy that some *a priori* notion, some undefined word, some intensity of personal conviction, is the weapon with which they are to be met. New facts, whether bearing on Scripture, or on religion generally, or on morality, are sure to win their way ; the tide refuses to recede at any man's bidding. And there are not wanting signs that the increase of secular knowledge is beginning to be met by a corresponding progress in religious ideas. Controversies are dying out ; the lines of party are fading into one another ; niceties of doctrine are laid aside. The opinions respecting the inspiration of Scripture, which are held in the present day by good and able men, are not those of fifty years ago ; a change may be observed on many points, a reserve on still more. Formulas of reconciliation have sprung up ; 'the Bible is not a book of science,' 'the inspired writers were not taught supernaturally what they could have learned from ordinary sources,' resting-places in the argument at which travellers are the more ready to halt, because they do not perceive that they are only temporary. For there is no real resting-place but in the entire faith, that all true knowledge is a revelation of the will of God. In the case of the poor and suffering, we often teach resignation to the accidents of life : it is not less plainly a duty of religious men, to submit to the progress of knowledge. That is a new kind of resignation, in which many Christians have to school themselves. When the difficulty may seem, in anticipation, to be greatest, they will find, like the apostle, that there is a way out : 'The truth has made them free'<sup>1</sup>."

To some of us the almost cheery optimism displayed in this passage may seem here and there a little doubtful and difficult, but Jowett never wavered in his twofold certainty that the spiritual was no less a reality than the material, and that different bits or pieces of truths must in the long run, and in the mind of God, be reconcilable with one another.

<sup>1</sup> *St. Paul*, II, pp. 521, 522 (ed. 2).

Thus he says in a sermon preached in 1871 :

"There is no real separation between truth and goodness ; but for a time, and owing to some misunderstanding, they appear to part company. . . . Religious men are beginning to be aware that they must not deny any true fact of history or science. Scientific men are becoming conscious that human life cannot be reconstructed out of the negative results of criticism, or the dry bones of science. The first thoughts of persons often are : this is at variance with what I learnt in childhood, with what I read in Scripture, with what I hear from the pulpit. Their second thoughts are that no truth can be at variance with any other truth, and that they must wait patiently for the reconciliation of them<sup>1</sup>."

And if for some of us a theoretic reconciliation between religion and science is too difficult, Jowett urges us to keep fast to the excellence of both ; we must combine the love of God with the love of truth.

"If the speculative reconciliation of science and religion seem at the present moment (1878) to be distant and improbable, we should struggle to attain the practical reconciliation of them in our own lives, not allowing mere scientific notions, whether physical or metaphysical, to extinguish in our minds the love of God or the power of prayer, nor on the other hand suffering the intensity of religious or devotional feeling to do violence to our sense of truth<sup>2</sup>."

He was anxious to show the practical gain to morality and religion which would ensue by a better realization of the universality of law. Both God and man are, as it were, made free by law.

"In which case are you the most free and most the master of your own actions—amid order or disorder, in a civilized country which has roads and laws, or in an uncivilized country ? in a state of life which is dark and deprived of experience, or in one which is lighted up by history and science ?

"Is it not obvious that as our power over nature increases, our responsibility towards other men increases also ? Do we not rather seem to want—I will not say a new religion—but a new application of religion, which should teach us that we are answerable for the consequences of our actions, even in things that hitherto seemed indifferent ; perhaps answerable for the good which we neglect to do, as well as for the evil which we do ?<sup>3</sup>"

In a sermon which the Master preached in the University Church in 1879 he makes the foundations of religion to consist of three "unchangeable truths." The first of these is the perfection of the

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, II, p. 64 (an extract from a University Sermon preached in 1874).

divine nature; the second is the life of Christ. Both these seem to mean to Jowett the clear certainty of goodness and truth, together with their origin and source in a divine reality. And then:

"Thirdly, among the fixed points of religion, we must admit all well-ascertained facts of history or science. For these too are the revelation of God to us, and they seem to be gaining and accumulating every day. And they do not change like mere opinions; after an interval of years, we come back to them and find them the same. No declaration of popes or churches can alter by a single hair's breadth any one of them, any more than it can alter in any degree the present or future lot of a single person. It cannot make that which is false to be true, and that which is improbable to be probable. And amid the shiftings of opinions, the knowledge of facts and the faith in them, whithersoever they seem to lead, has a tendency to stablish, strengthen, settle us. There are a thousand ways in which they bear upon human life and therefore indirectly upon religion. And there is also a more direct connexion between them; for we may regard truths of fact as acceptable to the God of truth, and the discovery or acquirement of them as a part of our service to him. And when we give up our long-cherished opinions or our party views to the power of fact; or when we seek to train our intellectual faculties in accuracy, in attention, in the conscientious love of truth—in this too there may be something of the sacrifice which is well-pleasing to him<sup>1</sup>."

From many passages in his writings and in his note-books we can observe that in his conception of the divine nature Jowett sought to combine the ideas of a person and of a law. God is *ὁ θεός* and *τὸ θεῖον* in one. There is a deeply interesting and suggestive paragraph in the introduction to Plato's *Statesman*, which well expresses this bent of his mind:

"Whether the best form of the ideal is a person or a law may fairly be doubted. The former is more akin to us: it clothes itself in poetry and art, and appeals to reason more in the form of feeling; in the latter there is less danger of allowing ourselves to be deluded by a figure of speech. The ideal of the Greek state found an expression in the deification of law: the ancient Stoics spoke of a wise man perfect in virtue, who was fancifully said to be a king; but neither they nor Plato had arrived at the conception of a person who was also a law. Nor is it easy for the Christian to think of God as wisdom, truth, holiness, and also as the wise, true, and holy one. He is always wanting to break through the abstraction and interrupt the law, in order that he may present to himself the more familiar image of a divine friend. While the impersonal has too slender a hold upon the affections to be made the basis of religion, the conception of a person on the other hand tends to degenerate into a new kind of

<sup>1</sup> Report of Sermon in *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Feb. 20, 1879.

idolatry. Neither criticism nor experience allows us to suppose that there are interferences with the laws of nature; the idea is inconceivable to us and at variance with facts. The philosopher or theologian who could realize to mankind that a person is a law, that the higher rule has no exception, that goodness, like knowledge, is also power, would breathe a new religious life into the world<sup>1</sup>."

Obviously in a theism of this kind there is no room for miracles. Jowett rejects them, first from the critical point of view, and secondly because his conception of God as a person who is also a law makes miracles inadmissible. Thus, he writes in a note-book:

"No one believes the miracles who does not believe the religion which they are supposed to attest. No Pagan believes the miracles of a Christian; no Christian, of a Pagan; no Jesuit, of a Jansenist; no Protestant, of a Catholic. Every one who affirms the truth of miracles does in fact assert the truth of his own miracles as the one exception to all the rest. But how impossible is this! For he asks you to believe the most improbable of all things, and does at the same time acknowledge a principle of self-illusion in human nature, quite sufficient to have invented them<sup>2</sup>."

And from a note-book of the year 1886 we have the following:

"Nor shall we ever return to the belief in facts which are disproved, e. g. miracles, the narratives of creation, of Mount Sinai<sup>3</sup>."

The loss of miracles did not seem to occasion him any pang, nor does he appear to realize the immense difference (as it seems to me) between a Christianity with miracles and a Christianity without them. In a great Westminster Abbey sermon, preached in 1883, he is speaking of the changes which may come to pass in the Church of the future; these he attempts to "anticipate in some measure from tendencies which already exist." And he quietly says:

"No sensible person would think nowadays of resting the evidence of Christianity on the basis of miracles, and may not this stumbling-block, which has so long almost necessarily divided the Christian from the scientific world, in the course of another generation altogether disappear? Such a change would certainly not be greater than many other changes of opinion, which some here present have witnessed in their own lifetime. The change will not be affected by argument, but there will be a growing sense among men that neither belief in this nor unbelief availeth anything, but only a life like that of Christ. There will be an increasing conviction that nothing in the past can ever be of equal importance with the present; that no opinion about religion is to be weighed in the balance with practice; and more and more we may expect to find that religion

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, IV, p. 441 (ed. 3).

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, II, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 310.

will be indissolubly bound up with morality, and that the idea of the nature of God will become ennobled, enlarged, idealized<sup>1</sup>."

Closely similar to his treatment of miracles was Jowett's treatment of criticism. To him religion is not based on a book or a narrative; free inquiry which results in any new facts can only be beneficial to religion. It is curious to read, forty years after it was written, Jowett's contribution to the famous *Essays and Reviews* on the *Interpretation of Scripture*. His prophecy in 1859, "that the increase of secular knowledge is beginning to be met by a corresponding progress in religious ideas," has in many respects been realized. Most people who read the article now will wonder why it created such a stir. It seems so obvious. It could almost be preached from any Jewish or Christian pulpit. Yet here we find laid down in the clearest terms the right and the benefit of free inquiry. Sentences like these are very interesting and significant:

"The healthy tone of religion among the poor depends upon freedom of thought and inquiry among the educated.

"Doubt comes in at the window, when Inquiry is denied at the door.

"That in the present day the great object of Christianity should be, not to change the lives of men, but to prevent them from changing their opinions; that would be a singular inversion of the purposes for which Christ came into the world. The Christian religion is in a false position when all the tendencies of knowledge are opposed to it.

"Criticism has a healing influence in clearing away what may be termed the Sectarianism of knowledge. Without criticism it would be impossible to reconcile History and Science with Revealed Religion; they must remain for ever in a hostile and defiant attitude. Instead of being like other records, subject to the conditions of knowledge which existed in an early stage of the world, Scripture would be regarded on the one side as the work of organic Inspiration, and as a lying imposition on the other.

"Criticism is not only negative: if it creates some difficulties, it does away others. It may put us at variance with a party or section of Christians in our own neighbourhood. But on the other hand, it enables us to look at all men as they are in the sight of God, not as they appear to the human eye, separated and often interdicted from each other by lines of religious demarcation; it divides us from the parts to unite us to the whole. That is a great help to religious communion. It does away with the supposed opposition of reason and faith. It throws us back on the conviction that religion is a personal thing, in which certainty is to be slowly won and not assumed as the result of evidence or testimony<sup>2</sup>."

Religion, then, to Jowett, "is not dependent upon historical events, the report of which we cannot altogether trust<sup>3</sup>." We must in con-

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays and Reviews* (1861), pp. 373, 374, 411, 431.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, II, p. 306.

sidering them attempt, not in any conceited sense, but in calm devotion to the God of truth, "to place ourselves above them." Whither the argument leads, thither, as servants of goodness and of truth, we too must follow. This line of thought is indicated in a passage in the introduction of the *Republic*, which can, however, only with some incompleteness be understood without a reference to the context in which it stands:

"A Greek in the age of Plato attached no importance to the question whether his religion was an historical fact. He was just beginning to be conscious that the past had a history; but he could see nothing beyond Homer or Hesiod. Whether their narratives were true or false did not seriously affect the political or social life of Hellas. Men only began to suspect that they were fictions when they recognized them to be immoral. And so in all religions; the consideration of their morality comes first, afterwards the truth of the documents in which they are recorded, or of the events natural or supernatural which are told of them. But in modern times, and in Protestant countries perhaps more than in Catholic, we have been too much inclined to identify the historical with the moral; and some have refused to believe in religion at all, unless a superhuman accuracy was discernible in every part of the record. The facts of an ancient or religious history are amongst the most important of all facts; but they are frequently uncertain, and we only learn the true lesson which is to be gathered from them when we place ourselves above them<sup>1</sup>."

With such views about miracles and criticism, we are naturally interested to hear what Jowett thought about the life and person of Christ, about inspiration, about the Bible, and about prayer.

Did Jowett believe in the Divinity of Christ? In one sense of the word I should think the answer would be in the negative. In the light of what we have already heard, it would be ridiculous to suppose that he believed in the story of the Virgin Birth, or in a miraculous resurrection. But it must also be remembered that the question would have seemed less real and less important to Jowett than it does either to very orthodox Christians on the one hand, or to most Jews upon the other. To him the opposition between God and man was less abrupt and profound than it is to most Jews. The doctrine of the divine immanence meant to him more, or went with him further. There was a more vivid sense of a diffusion of the divine everywhere rather than of its concentration within a single self-conscious personality. Thus we find him writing of God in the following way:

"In speaking of divine perfection, we mean to say that God is just and true and loving, the author of order and not of disorder, of good and not

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, III, p. xxxvii.



of evil. Or rather, that he is justice, that he is truth, that he is love, that he is order, that he is the very progress of which we were speaking; and that wherever these qualities are present, whether in the human soul or in the order of nature, there is God. We might still see him everywhere, if we had not been mistakenly seeking for him apart from us, instead of in us; away from the laws of nature, instead of in them. And we become united to him not by mystical absorption, but by partaking, whether consciously or unconsciously, of that truth and justice and love which he himself is<sup>1</sup>."

It does not therefore seem surprising that Jowett, with his profound admiration for the character and life of Christ, should have any difficulty in speaking of Christ's teaching as "the religion of a person whom we believe to be divine" (1879). He would not have thought it worth while, so to speak, to become a Unitarian. He would have said—personally I do not follow him, but I think he would have said—that the Unitarian was holding out on a subtlety of doctrine the importance of which had passed away. To him the Christian was the man who sought to live the Christian life, not he who held this opinion or that as to the person of Christ. A Jew can easily translate such sentiments into Jewish dialect if he finds any difficulty in realizing their meaning. A Jewish Jowett would say: The Jew is not he who believes or disbelieves that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, but he who loves God and loves man: the Jew is not he who observes or neglects this ceremony or that ritual, but he who loves righteousness and loving-kindness, and walks humbly before his God.

As to the greatness of the life and teaching of Christ, Jowett never wavered. Thus in a sermon of the year 1888 he says:

"We know that the life of Christ is so far above us that we cannot ascend to it. We can only follow humbly and at a distance. Of Christ we may say he went about doing good, because he was good, because he was truth, because he knew human nature, because he judged not as man judgeth. He lived in communion with God, and therefore he 'took of the things of God and showed them to men.' As God was his father, so he was like a father or elder brother to all other men<sup>2</sup>."

There are many similar passages; I note them here, without expressing agreement or disagreement, that I may faithfully record a main element, a central feature of his entire teaching. Perhaps his own position as regards Christ's person or divinity is nowhere more clearly indicated than in a sermon preached at Oxford in 1882. Jowett there tries to show that God was the witness to the purity and excellence of Christ's teaching and life.

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, II, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> *College Sermons*, pp. 323, 318.

"Christ has a greater witness than the witness of men. He feels that God is his witness. Without God he could not have lived such a life, or died such a death. To those who say, 'Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us,' he only replies, 'I am the manifestation of the Father.' Righteousness witnesses to itself, but it has also the witness of God. The Jews said, 'This is blasphemy,' and so it was for Simon Magus, or any other false prophet who had no truth in him, to declare that he was the 'great power of God.' But it was not blasphemy for Christ, feeling in his whole soul the love of God, the truth of God, the righteousness of God, feeling that in all his words, works, thoughts, he was reflecting the will of God, to declare himself one with God. The creed tells us that he was 'equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, inferior to the Father as touching his manhood.' But is it not more intelligible to us and more instructive to think of him as one with God, because Christ and God are one with righteousness and truth? Christ does not so much assume to be God as he naturally loses himself in God<sup>1</sup>."

It will be noticed that in this as in many other passages Jowett freely makes use of the fourth Gospel as well as of the Synoptics. The life of Christ as recorded in all four Gospels became to him more and more an ideal, and he was apparently not greatly concerned as to whether the actual Jesus of Nazareth did or did not say or do all the things which those four Gospels ascribe to him. He seemed to see in the story of Christ the ideal exemplar, the ideal human incarnation of perfect morality and perfect religion. It seems as if it was of little importance to him how far in every respect the actual man may or may not have corresponded with this ideal. At all events the ideal is there, drawn and depicted for all time for our continuous profit and edification. It was perhaps this half-historic and half-ideal way of regarding Christ which made the Master's teaching more sympathetic to Jews. He seemed to indicate that it was rather a question of circumstance or education whether you regarded the ideal in this personal way or not. Certainly about the substance or content of the ideal, as he depicted or elicited it from the Gospel narratives, there could be no dispute whatever. It was an ideal of morality and religion with which everybody, Jew and Christian, would be in practical agreement. I infer the accuracy of what I have just said about Jowett's conception of Christ from several striking passages, which I will now proceed to quote.

First I take some words in a sermon on "the Completion of a Life's Work" preached in 1882:

"And, perhaps, that very want of confidence in the letter of Scripture of which I was speaking at the beginning of this sermon, to which criticism and comparison of documents have given rise, and which by some persons

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford University Herald*, Oct. 28, 1882.

is regarded as the destruction of the Christian faith, may be really the means by which we attain to a higher comprehension of the whole, passing from words to things, from the sayings of Christ to the life of Christ, from the life of Christ while he was upon earth to the life of Christ dwelling in the heart of men, from Christianity as a sect to 'My kingdom is not of this world'."

Then in a note-book belonging to the years 1873 to 1876 we find the following :

"An ideal necessarily mingles with all conceptions of Christ; why then should we object to a Christ who is necessarily ideal? Do persons really suppose that they know Christ as they know a living friend? Is not Christ in the Sacrament, Christ at the right hand of God, 'Christ in you the hope of glory,' an ideal? Have not the disciples of Christ from the age of St. Paul onwards, been always idealizing his memory?

"We must accept the fact that the life of Christ is only partially known to us, like that of other great teachers of religion. And this is best for us. We have enough to assist us, but not enough to constrain us. And upon this basis the thoughts of men in many ages may raise an ideal more perfect than any actual conception of him. Each age may add something to the perfection and balance of the whole. Did not St. Paul idealize Christ? Do we suppose that all which he says of him is simply matter of fact, or known to St. Paul as such? It might have been that the character would have been less universal if we had been able to trace more defined features.

"What would have happened to the world if Christ had not come? what would happen if he were to come again? What would have happened if we had perfectly known the words and teaching of Christ? How far can we individualize Christ, or is he only the perfect image of humanity?"

Thoughts such as these, like innumerable other thoughts about religion and morality, were constantly being turned over in his mind. The practical Jowett was always thinking of spiritual things. In 1879 he re-reads Thomas à Kempis, and makes the following note :

"Is it possible to feel a personal attachment to Christ such as is prescribed by Thomas à Kempis? I think that it is impossible and contrary to human nature that we should be able to concentrate our thoughts on a person scarcely known to us, who lived 1,800 years ago. But there might be such a passionate longing and yearning for goodness and truth. The personal Christ might become the ideal Christ, and this would easily pass into the idea of goodness<sup>1</sup>."

Then at the very close of his life (1892), he writes in the same strain in a letter to Mrs. Humphry Ward. I quote the setting of the particular words I here want as well as the words themselves, because

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, II, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

they show the positive bent of the Master's mind. Though he welcomed the freest inquiry and the fullest criticism he yet always "placed himself above them":

"I hope that the age of Biblical criticism is passing away, and that we may get into a *largior aether*. I do not see that we have gained from it except negatively, and there of course we have gained a great deal by clearing away so much, but positively we have gained little or nothing. And even if we knew the manner of the composition of the Old and New Testament, and were sure of every reading and every date and fact, we should be no nearer the true form of religion. It is not with the very words of Christ, but with the best form of Christianity as the world has made it, or can make it, or will receive it, that we are concerned to-day. There is an ideal which we have to place before us intimately connected with practical life—nothing, if not a life—which may be conveniently spoken of as the life of Christ<sup>1</sup>."

This letter to Mrs. Ward throws some additional light on a superb passage with which the Introduction to the *Republic* now concludes. It is part of a short section added in the third edition, and belongs therefore, like the letter, to the latest period of the Master's life<sup>2</sup>. From its almost mystical language we can yet perceive that Jowett is seeking to find as it were a common term for that moral ideal which some see embodied and humanized in the person of Christ. He has spoken of two ideals which "never appeared above the horizon in Greek philosophy," but "float before the minds of men in our own day." These two ideals are the future of the human race in this world and the future of the individual in another. And having spoken briefly of them he ends as follows:

"There is a third ideal, not the same, but akin to these, which has a place in the home and heart of every believer in the religion of Christ, and in which men seem to find a nearer and more familiar truth, the Divine man, the Son of Man, the Saviour of mankind, who is the first-born and head of the whole family in heaven and earth, in whom the Divine and human, that which is without and that which is within the range of our earthly faculties, are indissolubly united. Neither is this divine form of goodness wholly separable from the ideal of the Christian Church, which is said in the New Testament to be 'his body,' or at variance with those other images of good which Plato sets before us. We see him in a figure only, and of figures of speech we select but a few, and these the simplest, to be the expression of him. We behold him in a picture, but he is not there. We gather up the fragments of his discourses, but neither do they represent him as he truly was. His dwelling is neither in heaven nor earth, but in the heart of man. This

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 445.

<sup>2</sup> The third edition of the *Republic* was published separately before the other dialogues in 1888.

is that image which Plato saw dimly in the distance, which, when existing among men, he called, in the language of Homer, 'the likeness of God,' the likeness of a nature which in all ages men have felt to be greater and better than themselves, and which in endless forms, whether derived from Scripture or nature, from the witness of history or from the human heart, regarded as a person or not as a person, with or without parts or passions, existing in space or not in space, is and will always continue to be to mankind the Idea of Good<sup>1</sup>."

Jowett's views on inspiration are, I should say, much the same as those of liberal theists in all religious denominations. But doubtless his broad and dispassionate utterances in *Essays and Reviews* must have given grave offence forty years ago. How the cobwebs of outworn theology are brushed away by such a sentence as this :

"To the question 'What is inspiration?' the first answer is, 'That idea of Scripture which we gather from the knowledge of it<sup>2</sup>.'"

And how simple and comprehensive is the next consideration :

"Any true doctrine of inspiration must conform to all well-ascertained facts of history or of science. The same fact cannot be true and untrue, any more than the same words can have two opposite meanings. The same fact cannot be true in religion when seen by the light of faith, and untrue in science when looked at through the medium of evidence or experiment. It is ridiculous to suppose that the sun goes round the earth in the same sense in which the earth goes round the sun ; or that the world appears to have existed, but has not existed, during the vast epochs of which geology speaks to us. But if so, there is no need of elaborate reconcilements of revelation and science ; they reconcile themselves the moment any scientific truth is distinctly ascertained. As the idea of nature enlarges, the idea of revelation also enlarges ; it was a temporary misunderstanding which severed them. And as the knowledge of nature which is procured by the few is communicated in its leading features at least to the many, they will receive with it a higher conception of the ways of God to man. It may hereafter appear as natural to the majority of mankind to see the providence of God in the order of the world, as it once was to appeal to interruptions of it<sup>3</sup>."

From a note-book belonging to the years 1873 to 1876 we are given the following "last words on inspiration" :

"1. Were the writers of the New Testament inspired when they wrote in any other sense than they were during the rest of their lives ?

"2. Is there any essential difference between the apostle St. Paul and St. Bernard, and if so, how is this difference to be defined or ascertained ?

<sup>1</sup> Plato, III, p. ccxxxi.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays and Reviews*, p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

"3. Is there any difference between St. Bernard and Plato except that they were men of genius of a different kind—the one a religious genius, the other a philosophical and poetical genius?"

"4. But if so, inspiration must be extended to all men who rise above themselves, who get out of themselves, who have anticipations of truths which they cannot realize; who live not in the present and individual, but in the future and universal world.

"5. But if so, every great and good man is inspired, or none are inspired, and all the great thoughts of mankind are to be treated as part of the sacred inheritance<sup>1</sup>."

Jowett was willing to use convenient phrases about inspiration, such as its human and its divine element, but he was well aware of their necessary inaccuracy. Our words and our thoughts are not equal to the complexity of the real relations between the human and the divine. In 1891 he writes the following:

"I do not think it is strictly correct to speak of the human any more than of the divine element in inspiration. We cannot separate them any more than we can separate mind and body: they run up into one another. But in common language it is a natural mode of speaking. In the higher part we include the truer and more spiritual conceptions of God, the more perfect morality, the holy life. In the lower part we may place the historical facts, whether true or invented, the passions of a warlike and semi-barbarous race, imprecations against enemies, and the like. I think it worthy of remark that in precept, though not always in practice, the Old and the New Testament everywhere rise above the animal passions and also above the deceits and falsehoods of mankind. These remarks seem to me to apply more or less to all the religions of the world: they are all more or less inspired, more or less human and also divine<sup>2</sup>."

The last quotation already indicates what it was that Jowett admired in the Bible, and how he regarded it. No one had a greater appreciation for the great sayings and teachings whether of the Old or of the New Testament. I have heard him repeat favourite sentences, such as "I desire love and not sacrifice," or "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," with a sort of inspired enthusiasm. The great can best understand the great: the profundity and magnificence of the highest prophetic teaching, or of the Sermon on the Mount, meant more to him than to an ordinary person. He saw deeper down; he realized more fully. But his admiration was always discriminating. "Nothing," he observes, "has ever surpassed the Psalms in depth and purity of devotion<sup>3</sup>." On one occasion he ends a sermon by quoting six very simple sentences from the Psalms, with this preface: "And now I shall sum up the meaning which

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 290.

I have imperfectly sought to convey in words which have been the comfort of many<sup>1</sup>." But at the same time he was at pains to point out that: "We are not bound to give our assent either to the conception of God, or the acts and words of inspired men, if our conscience revolts at them, merely because they are found in Scripture or read in churches<sup>2</sup>."

In another sermon he says:

"The religious ideas of one age require to be translated into the religious ideas of another. The religious thoughts of one age may become the feelings of another; the religious truth of one age may become the religious poetry of another. The language of the Old Testament is personal and individual, speaking heart to heart as one man speaks to another, telling of a God who is indeed always described by the Psalmist or Prophet as the God of justice and of truth, and yet asserts his despotic power to pull down one man and put up another. . . . There must be a silent correction of the familiar words of the Psalmist when we use them, if they are to express the truth for us. For we know that God is not sitting, as he is represented in some pictures, on the circle of the heavens, but that his temple is the heart of man; we know that he is not the God of one nation only, but of all mankind; we know that God helps those who help themselves. Except men build the house, the Lord will not build it; except the watchmen keep guard in the city, the Lord will not guard it. In everything the means are to be taken first, the laws of nature are to be studied and consulted:—then, and only then, the blessing of God follows us, and, in the language of the Psalmist, 'the Lord prospers our handiwork<sup>3</sup>.'"

Jowett would have teachers and clergymen neither exaggerate nor minimize the difficulties of Scripture. On this subject there are some wise suggestions in his article in *Essays and Reviews*. Thus he says:

"The poor generally read the Bible unconsciously; they take the good, and catch the prevailing spirit. . . . The child is only struck by the impiety of the children who mocked the prophet; he does not think of the severity of the punishment which is inflicted on them. And the poor, in this respect, are much like children: their reflection on the morality or immorality of characters or events is suppressed by reverence for Scripture. The Christian teacher has a sort of tact by which he guides them to perceive only the spirit of the Gospel everywhere; they read in the Psalms of David's sin and repentance, of the never-failing goodness of God to him, and his never-failing trust in Him, not of his imprecations against his enemies. Such difficulties are greater in theory and on paper, than in the management of a school or parish. They are found to affect the half-educated, rather than either the poor, or those who are educated in a higher sense. To be above such difficulties is the happiest condition of human life and knowledge, or to be below

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

them ; to see, or think we see, how they may be reconciled with divine power and wisdom, or not to see how they are apparently at variance with them<sup>1</sup>."

The wisdom of the last sentence (combining as it does a touching gentleness with just a glimmer of benignant satire) is truly admirable. According to this teaching I need not have removed the "bear" story from my *Bible for Home Reading*. But it may be doubted whether either the "children" or the "poor" of 1899 are quite the same as those of 1860. Perhaps a larger and growing number of the latter have passed into the class whom Jowett describes as "half-educated." And them these scriptural difficulties chiefly affect.

On the other hand the Essayist would wish to see the teaching of Scripture become a more integral part of liberal education, and taught in a larger spirit :

"It may be doubted whether Scripture has ever been sufficiently regarded as an element of liberal education. Few deem it worth while to spend in the study of it the same honest thought or pains which are bestowed on a classical author. Nor as at present studied can it be said always to have an elevating effect. It is not a useful lesson for the young student to apply to Scripture, principles which he would hesitate to apply to other books ; to make formal reconcilements of discrepancies which he would not think of reconciling in ordinary history ; to divide simple words into double meanings ; to adopt the fancies of Fathers and commentators as real knowledge. This laxity of knowledge is apt to infect the judgment when transferred to other subjects. It is not easy to say how much of the unsettlement of mind which prevails among intellectual young men is attributable to these causes ; the mixture of truth and falsehood in religious education certainly tends to impair, at the age when it is most needed, the early influence of a religious home<sup>2</sup>."

For the right study of the Scriptures there are several good hints and cautions in the course of the essay. Whether it was a classical poet or a Hebrew prophet, Jowett in either case had a wholesome fear lest the words of the text should become less familiar to the student than the words of the commentator. When he began to prepare his edition of the three Epistles of St. Paul, the first thing he did was to learn the entire Greek by heart. What he did in his own case, he recommends to others. He urges the student to use commentaries to get rid of commentaries, to have only one great object in view : to find out what the words actually meant to the original writer.

"Any one who, instead of burying himself in the pages of the commentators, would learn the sacred writings by heart, and paraphrase

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Reviews*, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 428.



them in English, will probably make a nearer approach to their true meaning than he would gather from any commentary. The intelligent mind will ask its own questions, and find for the most part its own answers. The true use of interpretation is to get rid of interpretation, and leave us alone in company with the author<sup>1</sup>."

And again (speaking of the New Testament, but with words which apply almost equally well to the Old) he says :

"The book itself remains as at the first unchanged amid the changing interpretations of it. The office of the interpreter is not to add another, but to recover the original one ; the meaning, that is, of the words as they struck on the ears or flashed before the eyes of those who first heard and read them. . . . All the after thoughts of theology are nothing to him ; they are not the true lights which light him in difficult places. His concern is with a book in which, as in other ancient writings, are some things of which we are ignorant ; which defect of our knowledge cannot however be supplied by the conjectures of Fathers or divines. The simple words of that book he tries to preserve absolutely pure from the refinements or distinctions of later times. He acknowledges that they are fragmentary, and would suspect himself, if out of fragments he were able to create a well-rounded system or a continuous history. The greater part of his learning is a knowledge of the text itself ; he has no delight in the voluminous literature which has overgrown it. He has no theory of interpretation ; a few rules guarding against common errors are enough for him. His object is to read the Scriptures like any other book, with a real interest and not merely a conventional one. He wants to be able to open his eyes and see or imagine things as they really are<sup>2</sup>."

For young men who are going to become ministers of religion, and who will have to write endless sermons, with perhaps no endless stock of matter and ideas, the caution which Jowett gives on the use of Scripture is probably not wholly out of date :

"The tendency to exaggerate or amplify the meaning of simple words for the sake of edification may indeed have a practical use in sermons, the object of which is to awaken not so much the intellect as the heart and conscience. Spiritual food, like natural, may require to be of a certain bulk to nourish the human mind. But this 'tendency to edification' has had an unfortunate influence on the interpretation of Scripture. For the preacher almost necessarily oversteps the limits of actual knowledge, his feelings overflow with the subject ; even if he have the power, he has seldom the time for accurate thought or inquiry. And in the course of years spent in writing, perhaps without study, he is apt to persuade himself, if not others, of the truth of his own repetitions. . . . Any one who has ever written sermons is aware how hard it is to apply Scripture to the wants of his hearers and at the same time to preserve its meaning<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Reviews*, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333.

Yet Jowett was far from saying that it is illegitimate to expand the words of the Bible and to give them a wider and sometimes a higher meaning. He writes about this subject with his usual fascinating wisdom in the opening of a sermon on "failure and success" preached in 1879.

"It has been common to apply the words of Scripture in senses which were not present to the minds of those who wrote or uttered them. Besides the original meaning, other meanings or uses of them have sprung up, which have been hardly less important. They have served not only as rules of life but as vehicles or expressions of the higher thoughts of mankind. They have stamped the literature of Christendom, which may be said to have been created out of them. The new meaning which was brought to them and was shown through them, the truth in the heart of men which was infused into them, has inspired the nations of Europe and been the light of other ages. Such an enlargement of ancient and sacred words appears to be natural and necessary. The world would soon have outgrown the religious books of its childhood if there were no power of adapting them to new wants and circumstances. . . . The sacred books of all nations, in so far as they retain any life or power, have experienced a similar adaptation. They mean, or are made to mean, more than the authors of them ever knew, or could have conceived. There is a new truth which is also old, another commandment which was given from the beginning. This is the progress of religious thought which is ever widening as years go on; which clothes itself in many solemn and expressive formulas, in many poetical figures, in many types and symbols taken from an older dispensation. It transmutes what is local and national into what is spiritual and universal. It is not merely the words of the Bible as they may be interpreted by the philological critic, but the words of the Bible as they have been enriched by the minds of men in all ages, as they have reflected their highest thoughts and feelings, as they have been lighted up by the lessons of human history, as they have been interpreted by experience, which have been the living word of God, bringing forth fruit in the world.

"There seems to be no objection to that manner of adapting Scripture which is so widely prevalent in religious writings, if we distinguish, as with our present knowledge we ought to do, between the adaptation and the original meaning. We are not making Scripture signify what we please, we are only endeavouring to read it by the light of our own highest thoughts, or seeking to find in it their best and truest expression<sup>1</sup>."

Before taking leave of this part of our subject, it is worth while to give two extracts, from different epochs of Jowett's life, dealing specifically with the Old Testament as such. The first is again taken from the article in *Essays and Reviews* :

"The Old Testament has also its peculiar lessons which are not conveyed

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 244.

with equal point or force in the New. The beginnings of human history are themselves a lesson having a freshness as of the early dawn. There are forms of evil against which the prophets and the prophetic spirit of the law carry on a warfare, in terms almost too bold for the way of life of modern times. There, more plainly than in any other portion of Scripture, is expressed the antagonism of outward and inward, of ceremonial and moral, of mercy and sacrifice. There all the masks of hypocrisy are rudely torn asunder, in which an unthinking world allows itself to be disguised. There the relations of rich and poor in the sight of God, and their duties towards one another, are most clearly enunciated. There the religion of suffering first appears—'adversity, the blessing' of the Old Testament as well as of the New. There the sorrows and aspirations of the soul find their deepest expressions, and also their consolation. The feeble person has an image of himself in the 'bruised reed'; the suffering servant of God passes into the 'beloved one in whom my soul delighteth.' Even the latent and most desolate phases of the human mind are reflected in Job and Ecclesiastes; yet not without the solemn assertion that 'to fear God and keep his commandments' is the beginning and end of all things<sup>1</sup>."

And twenty-six years later, from a note-book of 1886, we get the following:

"Hitherto the language of the New Testament has superseded or adapted that of the Old. But we may also return from the New to the Old. The language of the prophets has a much nearer relation to our feelings than the language of St. Paul, and infinitely nearer than the language of dogmatic theology<sup>2</sup>."

We have seen how Jowett sought to reconcile religion with science. The more law, the more God, seems to be his formula. How then, we ask, did he deal with the subtle problem of prayer? I fancy most people would say that no cut-and-dry answer can be given to the question. Jowett would perhaps not have thought any the worse of himself even if this be the case. What he said of Plato might also be said of him: "nor is he always consistent with himself, because he is always moving onward, and knows that there are many more things in philosophy than can be expressed in words, and that truth is greater than consistency<sup>3</sup>." The laws of our spiritual being which relate us to God are not capable of being exactly defined or understood; there clings about them a mystery, but none the less do we believe that they are laws and not caprice. It is this twofold aspect of them which Jowett presents to us, and when we consider his remarks on prayer as a whole, we shall, I think, find them characterized rather by unity than differences.

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Reviews*, p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, II, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> *Plato*, V, p. cxxxviii (from Jowett's 'Last Words' on Plato added in the third edition, 1891).

The longest and most detailed statement about prayer is to be found in the commentary on St. Paul. In its essentials I hardly think that Jowett would have desired to alter it even in his maturest years.

"Prayer is the summing up of the Christian life in a definite act, which is at once inward and outward, the power of which on the character, like that of any other act, is proportioned to its intensity. The imagination of doing rightly adds little to our strength: even the wish to do so is not necessarily accompanied by a change of heart and conduct. But in prayer we imagine, and wish, and perform all in one. Our imperfect resolutions are offered up to God; our weakness becomes strength, our words deeds. No other action is so mysterious; there is none in which we seem, in the same manner, to renounce ourselves that we may be one with God.

"Of what nature that prayer is which is effectual to the obtaining of its requests is a question of the same kind as what constitutes a true faith. That prayer, we should reply, which is itself most of an act, which is most immediately followed by action, which is most truthful, manly, self-controlled, which seems to lead and direct, rather than to follow, our natural emotions. That prayer which is its own answer because it asks not for any temporal good, but for union with God. That prayer which begins with the confession, 'We know not what to pray for as we ought'; which can never by any possibility interfere with the laws of nature, because even in extremity of danger or suffering, it seeks only the fulfilment of his will. That prayer which acknowledges that our enemies, or those of a different faith, are equally with ourselves in the hands of God; in which we never unwittingly ask for our own good at the expense of others. That prayer in which faith is strong enough to submit to experience; in which the soul of man is nevertheless conscious not of any self-produced impression, but of a true communion with the Author and Maker of his being.

"In prayer, as in all religion, there is something that it is impossible to describe, and that seems to be untrue the moment it is expressed in words. In the relations of man with God, it is vain to attempt to separate what belongs to the finite and what to the infinite. We can feel, but we cannot analyse it. We can lay down practical rules for it, but can give no adequate account of it. It is a mystery which we do not need to fathom. In all religion there is an element of which we are conscious;—which is no mystery, which ought to be and is on a level with reason and experience. There is something besides, which, in those who give way to every vague spiritual emotion, may often fall below reason (for to them it becomes a merely physical state); which may also raise us above ourselves, until reason and feeling meet in one, and the life on earth even of the poor and ignorant answers to the description of the apostle, 'Having your conversation in heaven'.<sup>1</sup>"

<sup>1</sup> *St. Paul*, II, p. 247 (ed. 2).

To some doubtless this language may seem vague ; to others it will represent a high ideal towards which their practice will seek to strive. The next extract from a letter written in 1865 says the same things in different words :

“Prayer, as at present conducted, is an absurdity, if it means praying for fine weather, &c. (faith must snap in the face of universal obvious facts) ; or an ambiguity of the worst kind, if the Theologian refuses to say, in reference to an action of everyday life, whether it is supposed to have this effect or not.

“There is nothing that more requires to be stated than that prayer is a mental, moral, spiritual process, a communion or conversation with God, or an aspiration after him and resignation to him, an anticipation of heaven, an identification of self with the highest law, the truest idea, the blending of true thought and true feeling, of the will and the understanding, containing also the recognition that we ask for nothing but to be better, stronger, truer, deeper than we are. I am afraid that the anthropomorphism of much of what is called revealed religion has obscured the natural religion of men on this subject. On the old theory, all answers to prayer were necessarily miraculous, and therefore the belief in them could not be otherwise than unreal<sup>1</sup>.”

In a different tone, but yet echoing the same fundamental ideas, is much which he says about prayer in a sermon on “going to church” preached at Balliol in 1875. Every young man who wants to spend his time in church or synagogue wisely and well would be the better for reading and pondering over that sagacious discourse. Here the Master, “careful of not saying more than he believes,” tells us in what manner we ought to lay our petitions before God and of what they should consist. We need not always attend to the words of the service :

“The advantage of public worship is that it is also private : any reasonable act of devotion may form part of it ; we may offer up to God our studies, entreating him to give us the power so to use our natural talents that they may be the instruments of his service. We may consecrate to him our business, praying that the gains which we make may be employed in his service, and sometimes devising plans of charity or philanthropy. We may review our faults, begging him to take from us all vanity, levity, sensuality, and to infuse into us a new mind and character. . . . Or, once more, we may ask of him to illumine our minds with the spirit of truth, with fairness and judgment, with accuracy and clearness, that in some way, whether by teaching or writing, we may assist in the education of mankind : so many topics of thought are there on which we may reflect and at the same time wish, for prayer is a time for wishing and thinking, not as some imagine a mere enthusiasm, or act of prostration, but requiring the highest exercise of the intellect, as

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, I, p. 410.

well as the deepest affection of the heart. God does not demand of us that we should lie down before him, like worms crawling in the sunshine, but that with our reason, the highest of his gifts, we should seek to recognize the truth of his nature—that we should watch what experience teaches about his modes of dealing with us—that we should turn again to that image of himself, transcending experience, which he has set in the human heart<sup>1</sup>.”

These last noble words are like a sentence in the first edition of *St. Paul's Epistles* which is not found in the second edition of 1859:

“Prayer is the very reverse of the assertion of ourselves before God; yet in kneeling before him, while we remember that he is God, he bids us remember also that we are men, whom, even when humbled before him, he would not have fall below the reason that he has given us<sup>2</sup>.”

To the end of his life Jowett retained a belief in the value of prayer. He is inclined to ascribe a laxity in the habit rather to moral weakness than to intellectual doubts. In the privacy of his own thoughts, with touching and habitual humility, he accuses himself of an inadequate love of God, and writes:

“Nothing makes one more conscious of poverty and shallowness of character than the difficulty of praying or attending to prayer<sup>3</sup>.”

Jowett cannot, I think, be accused of not facing with resolution all the difficulties of the subject. From a note-book of the year 1874 we are given an extract which begins: “Can there be prayer if the personality of God is no longer believed?” We must not take this to mean that Jowett himself did not believe in the personality of God. He would rather, I think, have said that “he is a person but not like ourselves<sup>4</sup>,” or again, that though “we pray to God as a person, a larger self, there must always be a *subintelligitur* that he is not a person<sup>5</sup>.” But however this may have been, and whatever varying value different persons may assign to the word “personality” as ascribed to or denied of God, the interesting thing is to see how Jowett seemed able to retain the worth and reality of prayer whether God be regarded as “personal” or not.

“Can there be prayer if the personality of God is no longer believed? I think so; prayer may be conceived as (1) communion with God; (2) recognition of the highest truth within us; (3) intense resignation to law, i.e. to the will of God; (4) intense aspiration within the limits of our own powers<sup>6</sup>.”

Some contradiction between his principles and his practice there may indeed always seem to be. He says himself: “Our forms

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, pp. 285–287.

<sup>2</sup> *St. Paul*, II (ed. 1, 1855), p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, II, p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> *Plato*, IV, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, II, p. 313.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters*, p. 241.

of worship, public and private, imply some interference with the course of nature. We know that the empire of law permeates all things<sup>1</sup>." But writing thus in 1886, he still composes prayers in his almost fatal illness in 1891. We may be absolutely convinced that his mind was no less clear and his utterance no less sincere at that time than five years before. And how truly noble these prayers are. One quoted in the *Life* has special reference to his own illness :

"Grant, O Lord, that we may have age without pain, and death without suffering ; that we may love thee, and be resigned to thy will, and may acknowledge thy laws to be in all things the rule of our life. Let us say in our hearts, 'The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' Make us to think in the hour of death of the sufferings of others rather than of our own, and let us not forget that there are blessings reserved for us greater than any pains and suffering. Give us peace, O Lord, in the hour of our agony, and let us thank thee for having made suffering possible to us<sup>2</sup>."

Then there is the prayer contained in his message to the College which was read out on the first Sunday of the autumn term of 1891, when he was unable to preach his usual sermon :

"We have not loved others in all classes of society as thou, O Lord, hast loved us. We have not thanked thee sufficiently for the treasures of knowledge, and for the opportunities of doing good which thou hast given us in this latter day. We have worried ourselves too much about the religious gossip of the age, and have not considered enough the fixed forms of truth. We have been indolent, and have made many excuses for falling short in thy work.

"And now, O Lord, in these difficult times, when there is a seeming opposition of knowledge and faith, and an accumulation of facts beyond the power of the human mind to conceive ; and good men of all religions, more and more, meet in thee ; and the strife between classes in society, and between good and evil in our own souls, is not less than of old ; and the love of pleasure and the desires of the flesh are always coming in between us and thee ; and we cannot rise above these things to see the light of heaven, but are tossed upon a sea of troubles ; we pray thee be our guide, and strength, and light, that, looking up to thee always, we may behold the rock on which we stand, and be confident in the word which thou hast spoken<sup>3</sup>."

Mankind will perhaps come to rest in two only seemingly contradictory ideas or tendencies which we may elicit from the Master's writings. Though "the empire of law permeates all things," we may still lift up purified prayers unto God, recognizing that we are in presence

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>3</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 347.

of a "mystery which we do not need to fathom"; that "in prayer as in all religion there is something that it is impossible to describe, and that seems to be untrue the moment it is expressed in words"; that "in the relations of man with God, it is vain to attempt to separate what belongs to the finite and what to the infinite."

As a sort of appendix to Jowett's views on prayer something may be said as to his position with regard to public worship and a liturgy. As to the former it is difficult to make any adequate extracts from his sermon on "Going to Church." While he is anxious to urge that we must not think better of ourselves "because we attend the public worship of God," or "divide men into good and bad according as they go to church or not," he nevertheless points out with admirable wisdom what the true uses of church-going are, or, at any rate, may be. I have already quoted the passage in which he shows how one of the advantages of public worship is "that it is also private," and how "any reasonable act of devotion may form part of it." Church or synagogue gives us opportunity for the higher rest, higher thoughts, the higher aspiration.

"We pass in review the last day or two, and ask ourselves whether we are doing enough for others; we seek to realize in our minds a higher standard of duty and character. Here are revived in us those aspirations after another and better state of being, which in good men are always returning and are never completely satisfied, but which, like wings, bear us up on the sea of life, and prevent our sinking into the routine of custom which prevails in the world around us. Here we resign ourselves to the pure thought, to the pure will, to the pure mind, which is the truer part of our own souls, and in which and through which we see God<sup>1</sup>."

Church-going is a means, not an end.

"The end is not that, but a change of nature and the fulfilment of the commandments of God. The sense of duty, the love of truth, the desire to do good to all men, are not inseparably connected with the habit of going to church. Yet a man may also make a noble use of the opportunities of public worship. They may deepen his nature and character; they may strengthen and steady him. They may draw him towards others and prevent his becoming isolated. They may enable him to resist the temptations of evil, to get rid of levity and egotism. They may teach him to know himself; they may lead him to think seriously of life; they may enable him to preserve consistency, when other men are going backwards and forwards from one pole of religious belief to the other; they are the natural balance of the amusements and excitements of youth, when the pulse beats quickly and the heart is eager, and the sorrows of life have not yet been felt. There is nothing in this which is necessarily

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 283.



formal or unreal or constrained. He who does not under some hasty misconception lay aside the habits of religion, as many in the present day seem apt to do, will find that they are in no way inconsistent with the love of truth. And he will learn, as years go on, that truth does not consist in a series of abstract propositions, or in systems of philosophy or discoveries about facts of science or history, but that of truth too there is a higher and more living image in the perfection of human nature—the likeness of God in Christ<sup>1</sup>."

The question of what constitutes an ideal liturgy is often before his mind. A curious passage occurs in a letter to a friend written in 1869.

"The making people repeat the Creed, prayer for fine weather, and other relief from temporal calamities; also, in another way, the reading of parts of the Old Testament, is thoroughly demoralizing. And do but think of the hymns they sing. A good essay might be written on the Ideal of Public Worship.

"You require (1) some common feeling concentrated in special acts or words; (2) the greatest latitude for individual thought or prayer; (3) every word should be true; (4) every word should be elevating. You would have to select out of ancient liturgies and mediaeval prayers. For no one can write a prayer now any more than he can compose an epic poem: and in some ways antiquity has such a curious religious power, stronger perhaps than the belief in a future life<sup>2</sup>."

Jowett himself, I think, proved the exaggeration of the last sentence, but in this as in some other extracts from the correspondence we have to observe the caution to which I alluded before. We must sometimes take them in the spirit and not in the letter. The spirit of what has just been quoted reappears in some notes of 1874:

"1. The true idea of a liturgy is that it should sympathize with the higher mind or intelligence of the church or congregation, in which each individual is also raised by communion with his fellow men:—Man rising to God in company with his fellow men.

"2. Can anybody suppose that the chance collection of 300 years ago can be suited to us in the nineteenth century?

"3. Ought not a recognition of the laws of nature to form a part of the services of the nineteenth century?<sup>3</sup>"

And from the same period of his life we have the following:

"A perfect Liturgy should be:—

"1. Ancient.

"2. Yet not at variance with modern scientific opinion.

"3. Should vary within certain limits.

"4. Should be adapted to private as well as public devotion.

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, I, p. 435.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, p. 242.

"5. Should consist of what is highest and deepest in thought and purest in expression.

"6. Should respond to the fears, hopes, sorrows, speculations of mankind.

"7. Should have no creeds; for these almost at once pass into mere words.

"8. Should be the 'expression' of our highest thoughts and feelings; not exhortations or confessions, not the mere intensifying or exaggerating of our ordinary religion, but the elevation of it<sup>1</sup>."

Would that that crying need, the reform of the Jewish liturgy, could be conducted on these lines! But Jowett was well aware of the immense difficulties that lie in the way. Already in the *Epistles of St. Paul* he wrote:

"Old age affords examples of habits which become insane and inveterate at a time when they have no longer an object; that is an image of the antiquity of religions. Modes of worship, rules of purification, set forms of words, cling with a greater tenacity when they have no meaning or purpose. The habit of a week or a month may be thrown off; not the habit of a thousand years. The hand of the past lies heavy on the present in all religions. . . . Among the educated classes belief may pass away, and yet the routine of ceremonial continues<sup>2</sup>."

To his remarks about a liturgy there may be added a note from the year 1878 about subjects for sermons:

"Subjects which ought to be, but never are treated in sermons:—

Love.

The Passions—not generally, but particularly.

Good manners.

Differences of rank.

The right use of money.

The influence of art.

Self-dedication.

The limits of self-denial.

Failure in life<sup>3</sup>."

On some of these subjects Jowett himself was wont to preach. He was also fond of biographical sermons, holding that "if there are sermons in stones, much more are there sermons in the lives of men." It is rightly humiliating to us second and third rate men to see the profound reverence with which Jowett, who was such a great man himself, speaks of great men, the leaders and teachers of mankind. Those sermons on Wesley and Loyola and Pascal and Wycliffe and Baxter and Bunyan and Spinoza show a splendid power of appreciating the great man in all his different manifestations and in all the variety of his beliefs. Jowett was not by any means inclined

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *St. Paul*, II, p. 464 (ed. 2).

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, p. 246.

to overrate the permanent value of printed sermons. "I observe," he says, "that sermons, although they are supposed to speak of eternal truths, have of all literary productions the shortest life<sup>1</sup>." But neither did he refuse to recognize their possible power and influence over the lives of men. In 1881 he preached a special sermon for undergraduates in the University Church, and devoted a considerable portion of his sermon to a picture of the life of the lawyer and the life of the clergyman. He there touches upon sermons :

"One of the chief sources of a minister's influence and one of his chief means of usefulness is preaching. Yet many a man is averse to taking upon himself the clerical office because he is, or fancies he is, ill-adapted for the performance of this duty. He is not literary, he is not eloquent ; how can he be qualified to teach others ? He hears preaching very commonly derided, and is doubtful whether the practice is of any real use. Such is the feeling. Yet so far from preaching being unimportant, we can hardly exaggerate its effect. Is it a small matter to seek to raise men above the world in which they live, to increase their knowledge of themselves, to renew in them the thoughts of a Divine Being ? Is it nothing that they should have impressed upon them, from time to time, a higher standard of duty towards God and their fellow men ? The best sermons are those which are the natural outgrowth of a man's character, not strained through books, but fresh from the experience of life<sup>2</sup>."

In another University sermon from which I have already quoted he gives comfort to those who are perplexed by the spirit of the age. The words are equally applicable to Jew as well as Christian : we have only to substitute "Law" for "Gospel," and "Judaism" for "Christianity."

"The minister of the Gospel who sometimes asks uneasily, 'What am I to teach now ?' need be under no real apprehension because a few of the commonplaces of theology are taken from him. The essentials of Christianity strongly and personally felt, not mere vague abstraction, but holiness and unselfishness, the living sense of truth and right, the love of God and man, have greater power to touch the heart than anything else. The good life of a clergyman is his best sermon ; and the doctrine by which he will most affect others is the fresh and natural expression of it. To have a firm conviction of a few things, is better than to have a feeble faith in many, and to live in a belief is the strongest witness of its truth<sup>3</sup>."

Reserving for a later stage the question whether Jowett faced the deeper problems of religion as fearlessly as he faced those which are connected with the miracles of the Bible or with historical criticism, I pass to a side of his teaching which was especially

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford University Herald*, Nov. 5, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Feb. 20, 1879.

characteristic of him, and yet was perhaps not always adequately understood—his religious broadness and toleration. Jowett's broadness was intimately connected with his growing insistence on the simplicity of religion, as well as with his penetrating capacity to recognize agreement in essentials under the widest apparent differences of form and of belief. But the distinguishing feature of his broadness, as of his scepticism, if that disagreeable word must still be employed, was that it was accompanied and justified by religious fervour and intensity. Jowett was not the champion of liberalism in religion because to him all religions were much of a muchness, or because he wanted religion to become less powerful in human life; he did not become "broad" because he grew less religious; but, on the contrary, because he became more religious, more absorbed in and possessed by certain large and simple truths, therefore he became broader. The broadness of an outsider, the broadness of contempt, indifference, or neglect, is of no value or interest. The broadness which is the expression of fervour is of the utmost worth. That was the broadness of Jowett.

One of the most classic expressions of this liberal fervour is contained in a letter written only two years before his death, to Mr. Edwards, the Principal of a Welsh theological college at Bala. Jowett was hovering on the brink of an illness which almost proved fatal, and was unable to be present at the re-opening.

"I dare say that you remember the often quoted saying of Lessing, that 'the Christian religion had been tried for eighteen centuries, and that the religion of Christ remained to be tried.' It seems rather boastful and extravagant, but it expresses the spirit in which any new movement for the improvement of theology must be carried on. It means that Christians should no longer be divided into Churchmen and Nonconformists, or even into Christians and non-Christians, but that the best men everywhere should know themselves to be partakers of the Spirit of God, as He imparts Himself to them in various degrees. It means that the old foolish quarrels of science with religion, or of criticism with religion, should for ever cease, and that we should recognize all truth, based on fact, to be acceptable to the God of truth. It means that goodness and knowledge should be inseparably united in every Christian word or work, that the school should not be divorced from the Church, or the sermon from the lesson, or preaching from visiting, or secular duties from religious ones, except so far as convenience may require. It means that we should regard all persons as Christians, even if they come before us with other names, if they are doing the works of Christ<sup>1</sup>."

Two points are made here. First: "Christians should no longer be divided into Churchmen and Nonconformists." Jowett was by

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 362.

no means wanting in attachment to the Church of England, "with all its faults," as he said in 1883, "the best and most tolerant of the Churches in Christendom and the least opposed to the spirit of the age<sup>1</sup>." But tolerance towards Dissent grew with his years. In 1891 he preached on Baxter in the Abbey, and I can well remember the tone in which he said :

"It is probable that the name of Baxter has never been celebrated before within these walls ; for he was the leader of the Nonconformists of his day ; and it is not to be supposed that perfect justice was done him in a later generation, any more than in his own by his opponents<sup>2</sup>."

A little later on in the same sermon he spoke of the Act of Uniformity (1662) as :

"The greatest misfortune which has ever befallen this country, a misfortune which has never been retrieved. For it has made two nations of us instead of one, in politics, in religion, almost in our notion of right and wrong : it has arrayed one class of society permanently against another<sup>3</sup>."

It seems natural that a liberal Christian such as Jowett should have made light of the minor differences, minor at any rate to him, which separate the Churchman from the Dissenter. But we are rather startled by the further statement that men should not even be divided into Christians and non-Christians, or that "we should regard all persons as Christians, even if they come before us with other names, if they are doing the works of Christ." But in one form or another this thought is constantly repeated in the Master's writings about religion.

To Jewish readers, it may at the first blush sound conceited. Jews are accustomed to hold that there are good men in every creed ; in this respect they separate ethics from religion, and believe that the dogmas and rites of every creed can consort with, and even sustain high products of morality. The point of view of a small minority must be different from that of an overwhelming majority. The Jews are a *quantité négligeable* ; most people never have met a non-Christian, or at any rate some one not born of nominally Christian parents, in their lives ; they think of such a person as an "oriental" or even as a "heathen," far distant from themselves in place and in ideas. "Christian" and "religious" have become pardonably synonymous. And if "religious" is interpreted in Jowett's sense, to mean the love of God and man, the service of goodness and of truth, then the identification of "Christian" with "religious" leads only to the purification and broadening of Christianity. The very moderation

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

or modesty of the Jews is liable to land them into error. For if, because there are good men in every creed, and because high morality can accompany a number of religions, they are inclined to make the distinguishing elements or characteristic features of Judaism to consist of ritual and ceremonies, such a line of thought tends to narrow and degrade their creed. Far better that each religion should assert that the life of righteousness and self-sacrifice makes him who lives it an unconscious adherent, than that the very conception of religion should be debased in the minds of men. For the words of St. Paul are still profoundly true: "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God <sup>1</sup>."

In Jowett's case the identification of "Christian" and "religious" was made the easier by his idealization of the person of Christ on the one hand, and his firm belief in the greatness and supremacy of the teaching and the life recorded in the Gospels on the other. This point of view comes out in many passages. In one sermon he speaks (as I have already said) of the "three fixed points of religion," of which the third is, as we saw, "all well-ascertained facts of history or science," and the first is the "perfection of the divine nature."

The second is the life of Christ.

"Secondly, among the fixed points of religion is the life of Christ himself, in whose person the Divine justice and wisdom and love are embodied to us. It may be true that the record contained in the Gospels is fragmentary, and that the life of Christ itself far surpassed the memorials of it which remain to us. But there is enough in the words which have come down to us to be the rule of our lives; and they would not be the less true if we knew not whence they came, or who was the author of them. They appear to run counter to the maxims both of the Church and of the world; and yet the Church and the world equally acknowledge them. To some who have rejected the profession of Christianity, they have seemed equally true and equally divine—may we not say of these, too, that they have been 'Christians in unconsciousness,' if, not knowing Christ, like him they have lived for others, infusing into every moral and political question a higher tone by their greater regard for truth and more disinterested love of mankind? For this is what gives permanence to the religion of Christ as taught by himself alone—its comprehensiveness; it leaves no sort of truth or good outside of itself to be its enemy and antagonist. Or to put the same thought in other words, it remains because of its simplicity. The teaching of Christ is not like the teaching of some scribe or commentator who can eke out a few simple words to a tedious length; or of some scholastic divine who elaborates the particulars of a system; it is summed up in a word or two, 'believe,'

<sup>1</sup> Romans ii. 28, 29.

'forgive,' 'be ye perfect even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.' It is not only common to different sects of Christians, but unites different classes of society, those who have and those who have not education, in one brotherhood. And if we could imagine the world ever so much improved, it would be still tending towards the kingdom of Christ, still falling short of his maxims and commands. Amid all the changes to which, during centuries to come, the Christian faith may be exposed, either from the influence of opinion or political causes, the image of Christ going about doing good, of Christ suffering for man, of Christ praying for his enemies—this, and this alone, will never pass away. And if anybody asks, Where, after all these assaults of criticism and science, and the concessions made to them, is our religion to be found now? we answer, Where it always was—in the imitation of Christ<sup>1</sup>."

In a later sermon, from which I have already quoted, the universality of the Christian spirit is again enlarged upon :

"He who hungers and thirsts after goodness and truth shall not be long in doubt about their true nature, for God will reveal them to him. He who is seeking for the light will not be left in darkness. To him who is saying, 'Who is the Lord, that I may believe on him?' Christ will appear, whether in the form of a person or not in the form of a person, whether in a Christian country or not in a Christian country, whether in the words of the Gospel or not in the words of the Gospel. For we are a long way off that revelation of God which Christ made to his disciples ; we see him at a distance only ; and there may be some who do not bear his name, and yet are partakers of his spirit ; and others again in so-called heathen countries, who speak of truth and righteousness in other language than that of the New Testament ; who have known Christ and have not known him, in the spirit and not in the letter. And the more we enlarge the meaning of his words so as to include those sheep of another fold, those Christians in unconsciousness, as they may be termed, the more truly do we enter into the mind of Christ<sup>2</sup>."

Jowett not unfrequently dwelt upon this thought of the "unconscious Christian," precisely as a liberal Jew, who, be it observed, can include in his Judaism all that is best and most permanent in the teaching of Jesus, could speak, if he pleased, about the "unconscious Jew."

"As there are nominal Christians in the world who say that they are and are not, so there are unconscious Christians in the world who say that they are not and yet are<sup>3</sup>."

Among those who hold aloof from all outward manifestations of religion, whether Jews or Christians, let us hope that there are many who answer to the following description :

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Feb. 20, 1879.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford University Herald*, Oct. 28, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 343.

"There are some persons, and not the least religious of men, who seem hardly ever to speak on the subject of religion. They are afraid of introducing a matter so serious into daily conversation; or they are overwhelmed by the difficulties which have gathered around the faith of Christ in this latter age of criticism and philosophy; they have never disentangled the true life from the traditions by which it has been overlaid. They have a high sense of honour and right, and they do their duty in a manner which shames most of us. They know that God is good; and in their lives they seek to imitate Christ himself by going about doing good. But they cannot make up their minds to profess themselves the members of a Church; it would not seem natural to them. What shall we say of them?—that they are Christians? that they are not Christians? Shall we lay stress on the name rather than upon the thing? or shall we boldly affirm the familiar words of a poet as containing the very essence of the teaching of Christian truth: 'He can't be wrong whose life is in the right'? Or shall we adopt an uncouth term, which yet may have a great significance to some minds, and say that they are 'Christian,' but in unconsciousness? Better perhaps to make use of the words of Christ himself and say, as he said to the young man who had kept the commandments, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven'."

Again, he sometimes likes to speak of the invisible Church, and of those who compose it. "Who they are no eye of man can discern;" for:

"As some of the best of Protestants have been condemned by Catholics and some of the best of Catholics by Protestants, so there are judgments in which the whole Christian world has concurred, which will nevertheless have to be reversed before the judgment-seat of God<sup>2</sup>."

And:

"As there is in any Christian Church or country a certain number of true Christians, so, on the other hand, in distant lands there are those to whom Christ in his individual person has never been revealed, who yet have had the temper of Christ, and in a way of their own have followed him. And in this invisible Church we include all those who in former ages, as well as in other countries, have lived for others and not for themselves<sup>3</sup>."

It has already been indicated how the religious "broadness" of Jowett was connected with the simplicity of his religious belief. He himself says that his religion became simpler as the years went on; his mind was concentrated more and more upon a few very simple but very far-reaching propositions. They seemed to him to constitute the religion of the future. In 1870 he writes to Sir R. Morier:

"I still think that there is something to be done in the way of making

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.



Christianity, whether under that or some other name, a reality. The daily life of people has been one thing, and there has been a mass of doctrines as well, with which they have muddled their minds. The simple love of truth and of God, and the desire to do good to man, have hardly been tried as yet, and people would tell you that they cannot be tried. There is something in your transcendental fluid : in some form or other—religious, moral, or metaphysical—men must rise above their daily life. I always feel the danger of utilitarianism or materialism lowering the character of education and of life <sup>1</sup>.”

In the last year of his life he writes about religious difficulties :

“They become less every year, because we are beginning to realize that religion is the fulfilling of the two great commandments, or, at a higher stage, the taking up the Cross and following Christ, and consists not in ceremonies and miracles or in any past facts, but in a Christian life. If any man has his mind fixed on justice, truth, holiness, doing good, he has religion enough. I believe that in the future religion will occupy the minds of men much more than it has in the past, and that it will be much simpler <sup>2</sup>.”

Sometimes he quotes a series of religious sayings in the Old and New Testaments, and then asks : What can be simpler than these ? Yet do they not comprehend the essentials of religion <sup>3</sup> ? “So simple,” he says, on one occasion, after starting a sermon by some such quotations, “so simple is the religion of Christ.” There is a grand passage in the first sermon which he preached before the University after he became Master of Balliol. He imagines Christ as once more on earth, and the words which would be upon his lips :

“He would have taught the new commandment, which is also old—purity of thought as well as of word and act ; the not doing things that we may be seen of men, or laying up for ourselves treasure upon earth ; the seeking first the kingdom of God, the forgiveness of injuries, the love of enemies—‘that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven.’ What ! only the Sermon on the Mount ! and we verily thought that he would have spoken to us of apostolical succession, of baptismal regeneration, of justification by faith only, of final assurance, of satisfaction and atonement ; or that he would have told us, not that the father came out and kissed the prodigal son, and fell upon his neck and wept, but that there was one way, and one way only, by which men could be restored to the favour of God, or that he would have wrought a miracle in the face of all men and put an end to the controversy about them ; but he only says ‘There shall be no sign given to this generation’ : or that he would have told us plainly when we asked him about another life ; but he only replies, ‘In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage.’ We thought that we should have been confirmed in those points of faith

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> e. g. *College Sermons*, p. 313.

or practice in which we differ from others and that they would have been condemned by him ; that we should have heard from his lips precise statements of doctrine ; that he would have decided authoritatively disputed points, saying, 'Thus and thus shall he think who would be saved.' But he puts us off with parables about little children, about the wheat and the tares growing together, about the new wine and the old bottles, about the wayward children sitting in the market-place, about a house divided against itself. . . . The language of theology seems never to fall from his lips<sup>1</sup>."

Jowett seems to have been so utterly impressed with these first principles of religion and morality, that all other minor questions, and all lesser difficulties and uncertainties, simply faded away from him. He brushed them aside, and perhaps wondered almost impatiently why others could not brush them aside so easily. They could not possibly affect him ; his mind dwelt so habitually among the big and simple verities (as to him they seemed), that he had no room for anxiety or care about the historic scaffoldings and casements of religious truth. He seems, on the whole, in spite of moments of gloom, to have been confident about the future of religion.

"We should look forward in faith to the future, and not be too much influenced by the accidents of the age in which we live—the state of knowledge, the progress of criticism, the conflict of ideas and modes of thinking. Human nature has been so created by God as to be sufficient for itself under all its trials. The world is moving on fast : ideas which are in the air trouble our minds, at times they seem quite to overpower us ; and we want to know where amid the floating sands of opinion we may find some rock or anchor of the soul.

"Is not the answer the same as of old : 'The things which are shaken are being removed, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain'? The law of duty, the standards of morality, the relations of family life are unchanged. No one can truly say that he is uncertain about right and wrong. 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' The answer is the same as it always was, 'Even by ruling himself after thy word.' The nature of true religion is not altered in the latter half of the nineteenth century. 'To do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God' : 'to visit the fatherless and the widow, and to keep himself unspotted from the world' : to live always as unto the Lord and not unto men ; to be kindly affectioned one to another ; to take up the Cross and follow Christ (if we are capable of it)—which of these precepts is changed by the inquiries of criticism ? Which of them does not come home to us, not only as a word of the New Testament, but as a self-evident duty or truth ?"

It is a very curious and striking fact that in another form Jowett seems to return to a doctrine which one might have thought utterly

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford University Herald*, Oct. 28, 1882.

remote from him. We know how by some Evangelical thinkers right down to our own times unbelief was regarded as a phase of immorality. The sceptic and the free-thinker were probably men of doubtful lives. Many will remember the magnificent castigation which is administered to this doctrine by George Eliot in her essay on Dr. Cumming. With any such form of it Jowett would obviously have had no sympathy whatever. But he does appear to have thought that, for many of us at any rate, doubts and anxieties as regards the fundamentals of religion and morality do reside, at least to some extent, in what he calls "the infirmity of the will." Preaching in 1888 on the text, "He went about doing good," he, as his manner was, soon comes to dwell upon the simplicity of true religion. He quotes, according to his wont, great and simple sayings from the Old and New Testaments. Then he urges, as in the previous quotation, that these sayings are easy and certain. "Is there any difficulty in understanding them? or does the heart and conscience of any one disapprove of them? Does not Greek philosophy, or rather all philosophy and all religion from time to time bear witness to them?" He again asserts that "there is no reason why at any moment of our lives we should be uncertain what is the rule of duty or the will of God." Then, shortly after, he proceeds to say:

"The real difficulty is not here, but we transfer to the reason what is really the infirmity of the will. All men to some extent, under some name or other, know the laws of God and nature, but they do not make them the laws of their own life. It is not the perplexities of the age in which we live, but the lusts of the flesh, the desire of approbation, the pride of life, childishness, vanity, egotism, self-love, which are the real hindrances to our progress in the Christian life. Most of us have been conscious of struggles within us, in which the lower has tried to get the better of the higher self. The conscience of some has gone to sleep, but may remember such struggles in the past. There are many voices sounding in the ears of men everywhere, but they do not hear with their ears or understand with their minds the words which now as of old Christ is speaking to them. They do not consider the one thing needful—how they may become better<sup>1</sup>."

Elsewhere he says:

"If you begin by seeking to do the will of God, more and more of his will shall be revealed to you. You shall live more and more in the light of his presence. You shall see him as he is, not disfigured by the traditions of men: and his grace shall be perfected in you<sup>2</sup>."

Some of us might say: That is all very well so far as morality is concerned, but the difficulties about believing in God (in

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford University Herald*, Oct. 28, 1882.

any adequate sense of the word "God") stand on a very different footing. A man may be as good as you please, and yet be unable to believe in the existence of Deity. I imagine that to Jowett religion and morality were so inextricably combined that to "believe" in goodness was to "believe" in God. I do not find him expressly discussing the problem: Suppose that "goodness" is the mere creation of man after long aeons of change; suppose that there is no "goodness" anywhere else in the universe except in man. How in that case can a belief in goodness be equivalent to a belief in God? But I think we may infer that his view was that human goodness is inexplicable without a divine or universal "goodness" as its condition, archetype, or cause.

Lest the last two quotations may give a false impression of the Master's position, we have to remember that truth was to him one of the greatest of the virtues, whether human or divine. Holiness on the one side, truth and justice (which is a form of truth) on the other—only of these can there never be "exaggeration or excess."

"These are the only true basis on which to raise a church, a society, a nation. These are the two aspects under which we can most nearly approach the nature of God. . . . He who in his conception of God departs from them, who allows the mirror of divine perfection to be tarnished or discoloured by the breath of earthly passion, will insensibly set up his own party or church in the place of God, and will end by putting himself in the place of his church<sup>1</sup>."

In several passages Jowett points out the interconnexion between what in Aristotelian language may be called the moral and the intellectual virtues. Thus in the *Essays and Reviews* we have the striking words:

"Even in this life, there are numberless links which unite moral good with intellectual truth. It is hardly too much to say that the one is but a narrower form of the other. Truth is to the world what holiness of life is to the individual—to man collectively the source of justice and peace and good<sup>2</sup>."

And to this we may add those noble words about the liberal student of religion with which the essay concludes:

"He may depart hence before the natural term, worn out with intellectual toil; regarded with suspicion by many of his contemporaries; yet not without a sure hope that the love of truth, which men of saintly lives often seem to slight, is, nevertheless, accepted before God<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays and Reviews*, p. 423.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

Over and over again does he urge us all to seek to see things as they really are. In the first edition of the book on St. Paul, he writes :

"The first rule of all life and conduct must ever be, whether in business or religion, in dealing with ourselves or others, to see how we really stand—to look at things as they really are<sup>1</sup>."

He gives this principle a moral and practical application :

"The evils of life would be greatly diminished if we could see them as they truly are, and if when we have recognized their true nature we could cast them all upon God. . . . We need to see ourselves as we truly are in all our relations to God and our fellow men. . . . We need, above all, to recognize that our lives are not the sport of chance, but they have their deep foundation in the laws of nature and in the will of God<sup>2</sup>."

In the sermon on Bunyan and Spinoza, which was originally preached at Edinburgh in 1871, and was repeated with little change in Westminster Abbey in 1893, he dwells at some length upon the hurtful separation of knowledge and faith. The first part—describing faith without knowledge—will be easily accepted as characteristic of Jowett, yet the second part—the description of knowledge without faith—is no less so. It is only the two in combination which adequately represent him :

"Faith without knowledge is a wilful and unmeaning thing, which can never guide men into light and truth. It will pervert their notions of God ; it will transfer them from one religion to another ; it may and often has undermined their sense of right and wrong. It has no experience of light or of history, no power of understanding or foreseeing the nature of the struggle which is going on in the human heart, or the movements which affect Churches, and which, as ecclesiastical history shows, always have been and will be again. It is apt to rest on some misapplied quotation from Scripture, and to claim for its own creed, theories, and fancies the authority of inspiration. It is ready to assent to anything, or at least to anything which is in accordance with its own religious feeling, and it has no sense of falsehood and truth. It is fatal to the bringing up of children, because it never takes the right means to its ends, and has never learned to discern differences of character. It never perceives where it is in this world. It is narrowed to its own faith and the articles of its creed, and has no power of embracing all men in the arms of love, or in the purposes of God. It is an element of division among mankind, and not of union. It might be compared to a fire, which gives warmth but not life or growth—which instead of training or cherishing the tender plants, dries them up, and takes away their spring of youth.

"But then, again, knowledge without faith is feeble and powerless, unsuited to our condition in this world, supplying no sufficient motive

<sup>1</sup> *St. Paul*, II, p. 419 (ed. 1).

<sup>2</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 98.

of human action. It is apt to sink into isolation and selfishness, and seem rather to detach us from God and our fellow men than to unite us to them. It is likely to pass into a cold and sceptical temper of mind, which sees only the difficulties that surround us, and thinks that one thing is as good as another, and that nothing in this world signifies. This is a temper of mind which is the ruin of the head as well as of the heart; for no man can pursue knowledge with success who has not some sense of the higher purposes of knowledge, some faith in the future, some hope that the far-off result of his labours will be the good of man, and the fulfilment of the will of God in the world <sup>1</sup>."

In an earlier passage of the same sermon on Bunyan and Spinoza, Jowett observes that the "highest qualities of either seem to be also the characteristics of the other."

"Humility, simplicity, disinterestedness, the absence of envy or malice, the temper of a little child, are the attitudes of the philosopher as well as of the Christian; for moral qualities, when they rise to a certain height, seem to involve intellectual qualities; and intellectual qualities, when viewed in their highest aspect, become moral ones. No man can be perfectly good who is not also wise; no man can walk safely amid the temptations of the world who has no knowledge of the world; no man can act rightly who is incapable of foreseeing the consequences of his actions; and there are many more links than at first sight appears by which reason and faith are bound together, righteousness and truth meet one another <sup>2</sup>."

With these opinions it is not surprising that Jowett desired, that the intellect should, as it were, combine with the heart in the work of religion. Already in 1863 we find him writing:

"I cannot help anticipating that increased freedom of opinion may lead to a real amendment of life. Hitherto, religion seems to have become more and more powerless among the educated classes. Do we not want a Gospel for the educated—not because it is more blessed to preach to the educated than to the poor, but because the faith of the educated is permanent, and ultimately affects the faith of the poor <sup>3</sup>?"

But the many-sidedness of Jowett is shown on the one hand by his clear perception that there is such a thing as relative truth, which must also be observed, and, on the other hand, by his sympathy with and appreciation of the lowliest and most unintellectual forms of goodness and of piety. To illustrate the first point I will only quote a single passage to be found in a sermon preached in 1885:

"We may argue that truth kept back is the greatest source of doubt and suspicion; that faith cannot survive without inquiry, and that the

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, I, p. 362.

doubt which is raised may be the step upwards to a higher faith. And so we arrive at the conclusion, that truth is good, and to be received thankfully and fearlessly by all who are capable of receiving it. But on the other hand it is not always to be imparted in its entirety to those who cannot understand it, and whose minds would be puzzled and overwhelmed by it. What use would there be in discussing with a cottager the chronological difficulties of the Old Testament history, or in explaining to a child that the story of Joseph and his coat of many colours, which conveys so vivid a picture to his mind, partakes of the nature of an Eastern fiction? In human life there is an absolute principle of truth, and happy is he who seeks it out and finds it. But there is also truth and right, relative to the circumstances of men, to differences of age and sex and intelligence. And in their best form these two views will be found to coincide. While in the apostle's phrase, 'strong meat is reserved for them of full age,' a wise man knows instinctively what he should say in different companies and to different persons<sup>1</sup>."

Jowett's appreciative admiration of lowly goodness and of simple piety may be partly accounted for by his width of sympathy and penetrative insight, and partly by his Evangelical upbringing and associations. In a sermon preached in 1870 at Westminster Abbey, he touches on the three parties or spirits in the Church, and speaks of the Evangelicals and of what we owe to them. "Many of us may remember with gratitude that to good and simple-minded persons of this school of opinion we owe our earliest religious impressions." "Many an one in pious stillness and humility has led a life of absolute self-devotion, of heavenly resignation, sustained on what appear to some of us to be exaggerated and narrow views of religion<sup>2</sup>." He objects to any uncritical judgment of religious revivals. Such "movements ought not to be ridiculed or sneered at by persons of education, though there may be ridiculous circumstances connected with them. . . . We cannot expect all persons to receive the Gospel in the same quiet, rational manner<sup>3</sup>." Before God the difference between the wise and the ignorant is infinitesimal. In his "Essay on the Immortality of the Soul," he says:

"Sometimes we are led by our feelings, rather than by our reason, to think of the good and wise only as existing in another life. Why should the mean, the weak, the idiot, the infant, the herd of men who have never in any proper sense the use of reason, reappear with blinking eyes in the light of another world? But our second thought is that the hope of humanity is a common one, and that all or none will be partakers of immortality. Reason does not allow us to suppose that we have any greater claims than others, and experience may often reveal to us unexpected flashes of the higher nature in those whom we had despised<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> *Plato*, II, p. 173.

This last passage is on the same lines as the conclusion of the "Essay on Conversion and Changes of Character" in the *St. Paul* :

"Reason, and reflection, and education, and the experience of age, and the force of manly sense are not the links which bind us to the communion of the body of Christ; it is rather to those qualities which we have, or may have, in common with our fellow men, that the Gospel is promised; it is with the weak, the poor, the babes in Christ,—not with the strong-minded, the resolute, the consistent—that we shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven<sup>1</sup>."

There was no form of useful work with which the Master had not sympathy; none concerning which he would not have those who are occupied in it understand that it can be ennobled by the spirit in which it is carried on. How admirable for instance is what he says about domestic service and the respective duties of master and servant. For example :

"The duties of servants are for the most part a daily routine of little things, but these little things make up life, and they are ennobled by the manner in which they are performed, as 'unto the Lord and not unto man,'—'as unto the Lord, but also unto men'; for it is natural that they should become attached to their masters and mistresses; that they should be glad to see him, and he to see them, when he returns after an absence; that the house should seem pleasanter, brighter, warmer, while he is with them. They are part of the family, and also, if they deserve to be so, in a measure the friends of his friends. They are not serving for him; but for the sense of duty, for the love of God<sup>2</sup>."

So in the sermon upon "the Completion of a Life's Work," he says :

"Many of us must have known of servants who have devoted themselves to the bringing up of a family, the very type of good sense and high principle in a limited sphere, faithful in good or evil fortune, the pillar, the example of the house in which they lived. They too have finished the work which was given them to do; they have 'gone home and taken their wages.' And we sometimes wish that we in our sphere of life could offer up to God anything as good as that faithful service<sup>3</sup>."

It is characteristic of the man that in leaving by will a legacy to his two housemaids, Jowett adds: "I hope that they will lead good and useful lives<sup>4</sup>."

There were other lives which he appreciated as well, lives cut off when their work had scarce begun, or lives so situated that work in the ordinary sense of the word could hardly be done by them at all.

<sup>1</sup> *St. Paul*, II, p. 249 (ed. 2).

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 353.

<sup>3</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, II, p. 478.



Of the first the Master speaks touchingly in his sermon on Pascal, where he used a favourite text: "He being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time."

"Time cannot measure the value or fullness of human life. There have been young persons dying in their teens who have left behind them a memory and an example to those older as well as younger than themselves. We hardly wished them to have lived longer: like some fair plant they grew up at once to perfection. Their ways were so gentle and gracious that they seemed almost too good for this world. . . . We look back upon them as they were at fifteen, eighteen, nineteen; the image of them may sometimes come between us and selfishness or sin<sup>1</sup>."

Few who had the good fortune to hear it can forget the close of the sermon on "the Completion of a Life's Work":

"Yes, we acknowledge that there are broken lives, pieces of lives which have begun in this world to be completed, as we believe, in another state of being. And some of them have been like fragments of ancient art which we prize not for their completeness but for their quality, and because they seem to give us a type of something which we can hardly see anywhere upon earth. Of such lives we must judge, not by what the person said or wrote or did in the short span of human existence, but by what they were: if they exercised some peculiar influence on society and on friends, if they had some rare grace of humility, or simplicity, or resignation, or love of truth, or self-devotion, which was not to be met with in others. God does not measure men's lives only by the amount of work which is accomplished in them. He who gave the power to work may also withhold the power. And some of these broken lives may have a value in his sight which no bustle or activity of ordinary goodness could have attained. There have been persons confined to a bed of sickness, blind, palsied, tormented with pain and want, who yet may be said to have led an almost perfect life. Such persons afford examples to us, not indeed of a work carried out to the end (for their circumstances did not admit of this), but of a work, whether finished or unfinished, which at any moment is acceptable to God. And we desire to learn of them, and to have an end like theirs when the work of active life is over and we sit patiently waiting for the will of God<sup>2</sup>."

These are the words of the man who was supposed to have set too great a value upon "outward success." The supposition is false, and not the less false, because in a note-book of 1883 he accuses himself of not having had a nobler ideal in his youth than that of "success in life<sup>3</sup>." Jowett was intensely keen that every one should achieve and do all that was in their power. He was afraid lest young men should waste their time in idleness, or in dreams,

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, II, p. 242.

or in illusions, or in empty aspirations after unattainable good. He wanted to break down the wall of separation between the secular and the religious, and to show that the true success was in work done as unto God, and not unto men. Conversely he also held that the most business-like adaptation of means to ends, or the most commonsense survey of consequences, was the most religious way in which work could be carried on. Not only must we be ready to die, but ready also to live. Preachers often speak of the terrible uncertainty of life; he would speak about its "comparative certainty," an aspect of the subject "which is quite as religious and more practical, and has not so often been dwelt upon in sermons."

The word success may be used in a higher and a lower sense, and Jowett often distinguishes between them. There is the matter, and there is the manner. Some forms of work are in themselves higher than others, but there is scarcely any which cannot be ennobled by the spirit in which it is done. It is this spirit which, superadded to the "material" results, constitutes the true success. Or again, there is a "success of the mind," in which a man rises above his profession, and instead of being overpowered by circumstances, is the lord of them. And above all these, there is the success which has in it an element of eternity, when a man "in the ordinary business of life finds a higher business," and seeks to live according to the will of God.

"The small affairs of life, and the things which we hardly name in connexion with religion, if they are done in a true and simple manner, partake of this higher, this divine character<sup>1</sup>."

"There is an eternal element even in worldly success, when, amid all the rivalries of this world, a man has sought to live according to the will of God, and not according to the opinion of men. Whatever there was of justice, or purity, or disinterestedness in him, or Christlike virtue or resignation, or love of the truth, shall never pass away. When a man feels that earthly rewards are but for a moment, and that his true self and true life have yet to appear: when he recognizes that the education of the individual beginning here is continued hereafter, and, like the education of the human race, is ever going on: when he is conscious that he is part of a whole, and himself and all other creatures are in the hands of God; then his mind may be at rest: he has nothing more to fear: he has attained to peace and is equally fit to live or die<sup>2</sup>."

How admirably the two aspects of human life are combined, with due justice done to each, in the following:

"The best part of human actions is the spirit in which they are performed; the spirit which bears witness with God's spirit and unites

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 263 (1879).

us to him. And secondly, the highest use of the means involves the recognition of the end: in politics, for example, of some final triumph of righteousness which by gradual steps we hope to approach more nearly, of some increased diffusion of enlightenment or happiness which we know to be the will of God. There is no presence of God in the higher sense in the operations of war or business, in the skill of the engineer, in the art of the painter, in the trivial round of life, any more than in the greater aims of earthly ambition. But when in war or business, or the fulfilment of their daily duties, men begin to be animated by higher motives, and feel that they are living, not for themselves or for their own individual good, but for others, working together for God and his laws, then they may think of God building the house, of God keeping the city. When they have acted as if all depended on themselves, they may feel that everything depends on God and returns to him<sup>1</sup>."

In the sermon on "the Completion of a Life's Work," he again takes up the idea of a man working for or together with God.

"We may think of this work of whatever kind as the work of God upon earth, which is carried on independently of us, and in which we are allowed to bear a part. It wonderfully clears a man's head and simplifies his life when he has learned to rest not on himself but on God, when he sees his daily life and his daily work with a kind of intensity in the light of God's presence. He is not divided between this world and another, or trying to make the best of both. He has one single question which he puts to himself, one aim which he is seeking to fulfil—the will of God. He wants to know what is true or right in the sight of God. He does not care about the compliments of friends or the applause of the world, the breath of popular air or favour. He desires to work, not for the sake of any of these things, but for the sake of the work only. He wants to be rid of self in all its many deceitful, ever-recurring forms, that he may be united to God and the truth<sup>2</sup>."

In his College sermons the Master was wont to speak to his hearers of quite ordinary, commonplace subjects—the duty of keeping accounts, shyness, conversation, eating and drinking, and so on. His advice and counsel were stimulating, suggestive, sagacious; but perhaps the finest feature was the way in which he showed how these ordinary and commonplace subjects could be transfigured with a religious light. As an instance of this I will quote a passage taken from the end of the sermon on "Conversation":

"The apostle St. Paul, after attempting to make rules and to draw distinctions about meats and drinks, finally sums up the conclusion in the following words: 'Whether we eat or drink, let us do all to the glory of God.' And so, leaving the niceties of self-observation, we too may say, 'Whatever we utter, whether in jest or earnest, let us speak

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

only to the glory of God ; let our tongue still be employed in his service.' We cannot always have the thought of God present to us, but we may feel in our intercourse with others some restraining influence, some inspiring power, coming we know not whence. When we repress the egotistical remark, the ill-natured story, the weak comparison of ourselves with others, the impure imagination, although we do not expressly refer our words to him, we may be truly said to speak unto the Lord and not to man. When we regard truth more than the entertainment of the company, when we seek to do justice to others and feel kindly towards them, then, although in a limited and imperfect manner, we reflect his attributes. When there is peace and good-will in a society, there he is in the midst of them ; when there is joy on earth, then in a figure there is joy too in heaven<sup>1</sup>."

On a higher plane, but yet in the same spirit, are the Master's reflections upon study, and how that too, in all its forms, may be made a service unto God. Beginning from a determination to "love knowledge for its own sake, not for any earthly interest, but from the simple desire to know"; working hard, not merely "with a view to obtain honours in an examination," but "because it is a duty to make the most of our lives and cultivate the talents which God has given us," we may mount up to a true "consecration of study," to "presenting" ourselves as "a 'living sacrifice' to the service of God<sup>2</sup>." The close of the sermon on "Study" may be quoted in full :

"Study is a service, perhaps the highest service that we can render to God : it teaches us his purposes ; it reconciles us with his laws ; it enables us to see the truth more nearly as he sees it ; it shows us the revelation of his spirit, in the lives of great and good men. . . . At the foundation of all true study there lie moral and religious qualities, such as honesty, including accuracy, the disinterested love of truth, the desire to impart knowledge to all and to make it minister to the wants of our fellow men. Is there anything superstitious in beginning our studies with a prayer to God, either spoken or silent, that he would enlighten and strengthen our minds, because we are not seeking our own fame or success, but only his glory ; that he would give us peace and truth, and allow us to cast the burdens of study upon him ; that he would enable us to keep the mind above the body in all the fretful nervous trials of disease, in the sad hours when our faculties are distracted ? As Milton says—

'So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate ; there plant eyes, all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse.'

So we too may pray God to deliver us from the darkness of prejudice, from the false colours of sentiment, from the veil of self-conceit which so easily envelops us ; that our eyes may truly see him and our minds

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

perceive him in history, in nature, in man. Let us pray that the knowledge which we acquire may assist us in fulfilling his work ; in lessening the sufferings and helping the needs of our fellow men ; and lead us through the things of sense up to that perfect idea of goodness and truth which he himself is<sup>1</sup>."

Passing from a field of service which can only apply to a few, to one which has a universal interest to us, we can note how Jowett takes the same line in regard to sorrow as to study. Sorrow too must be consecrated to God. He often urges this point in his noble letters of condolence to friends who had suffered the bereavement of death :

"Rest assured, my dear friend, that there is a divine love as well as a human love which encompasses us, the dead and the living together, which leads us through deserts and solitudes for a time to make us extend the sphere of our affections beyond living relatives to other men, to himself and to the unseen world<sup>2</sup>."

Or again :

"I venture to ask you whether sorrow should not work in some other way—in raising us to a higher level of life—in a diffused care and love of all, taking the place of an absorbing affection for one—in an absolute trust in God though he has left us so very dark? According to each person's character, should they not try to heal their sorrow for the sake of others?" "What we should desire is not by excitement to keep alive a passionate sorrow, but that this discipline of sorrow may pass into our minds and lives<sup>3</sup>."

In one of his sermons he bids us remember that :

"Our only comfort and truest hope is to make out of our sorrow a stepping-stone to some higher self ; if the love of a friend or companion, without losing the recollection of the part, can be transfigured into the love of God and of all good, and the desire to heal the broken-hearted when we ourselves are broken in heart<sup>4</sup>."

The close of another sermon alludes to the same subject, and presents the same high teaching :

"Thus at every turn of life we may go out of ourselves to rest in God. He is the true centre of all human things, in whom all the varieties of human character meet and are satisfied, in whom only the greater passions of mankind, seeking in vain for something which they know not, can safely find their object ; from whom, too, men's passing emotions receive their true law—all of them to be diffused again over our fellow men, like rain falling upon the earth. For whatever we give to God he gives back again to us in another form, refined, hallowed, strengthened. The

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, I, p. 359.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, pp. 20, 280.

<sup>4</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 175.

sorrow which would have been fruitless if suffered to run wild, when consecrated to him may teach us truths of which we had not previously thought, penetrating and sanctifying our lives. The trials of mind through which we pass may develop powers and interests in us of which we never dreamed; regarded as a part of the order of the world, which God has appointed that they may discipline and strengthen us<sup>1</sup>."

That which Jowett meant by the word "God" was, as we have seen, a tremendous reality to him. "When we feel ourselves weakest," he writes, "it is a new strength to think of the unchangeableness of God<sup>2</sup>." It is touching to find how he strove with all his might to practise the lessons which he taught. He did verily try to make his life a service. His reflections in a note-book of 1883 are almost too sacred and personal to print. "May every hour of the day, and every pound that I have to spend, be given to God." "I have no idea except that of fulfilling my duty to the University" (he was then Vice-Chancellor) "and of devoting the remaining years to the service of God<sup>3</sup>." Constantly too comes out in these note-books, as in his letters, the deep humility of the man—a humility all the more inspiring when one remembers his position and greatness. If one turns from such passages to the sermons, their sincerity becomes the more apparent, and their cogency the greater. In his sermon on "Going to Church" he speaks about the "Confession" in the Book of Common Prayer, and alludes to the current criticisms upon it:

"Others are displeased at the repetition of the same confession day after day—for why, if we confess that we are miserable sinners, do we not cease to be miserable sinners? or why, when we are unconscious of any sin committed or any duty unfulfilled, should we still repeat, 'We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done'?"

In the light of Jowett's own personal humility, it is with a quickened sense of shame that we read his reply:

"With reference to the Confession, though it might be better that such solemn words were not repeated day after day until they are apt to become formal, yet there is a truth of feeling in them which comes home to the religious mind: 'The best of us are doing so little and that so ill, in comparison of the requirements of God.' Our lives are poor and unsatisfactory, and the daily wish of our hearts is that they may become purer, holier, better. At times when we feel how we are under the influence of interested motives or of the opinions of others, how little we have of nobility or independence, we are tempted to say, 'Lord, there is no health in us.' Certainly we do not value anything that we do: the better we are, the more conscious we become of our own defects; the

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, II, p. 456.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

wiser we are, the more sensible we grow of our own ignorance. We know that every good gift has come from him, and that he alone 'has made us to differ from others'; and our only desire is that we may give back to him what he has given to us<sup>1</sup>."

With this genuine humility, Jowett combines in his teaching the sagest common sense. He bids us look to the essentials, and not to worry ourselves about the details. The one vital question is: "Are men becoming better?"

"That is the shortest, the simplest, and the most vital question, which any man can ask about himself, or about his church, about the society in which he lives, or about the country of which he is a citizen<sup>2</sup>."

Let young men not worry their heads too much about religious differences and difficulties:

"Admitting that we are disagreed about many questions of doctrine and many historical facts, including the great question of miracles, are we not agreed about the first principles of truth and right, about the nature of God, about a future life, about the teaching of Christ? Have we not enough in common to carry on the war against evil? The question that a young man has really to answer is not 'What is the true doctrine of the Sacrament?' but how he shall make the best use of his time, how he shall order his expenses, how he shall control his passions (that they may not, like harpies, be pursuing him all through life), how he can live to God and the truth instead of living to pleasure and to himself<sup>3</sup>."

In morals and in religion the current proverb about expenditure must be reversed. Here it is: "Take care of the pounds, and the pence will take care of themselves." Some of Jowett's reflections on this subject in the *Epistles of St. Paul* are very effective. The following is from the "Essay on Conversion and Changes of Character":

"Many a person will tease himself by counting minutes and providing small rules for his life, who would have found the task an easier and a nobler one, had he viewed it in its whole extent, and gone to God in a 'large and liberal spirit,' to offer up his life to him. To have no *arrière pensée* in the service of God and virtue is the great source of peace and happiness. Make clean that which is within, and you have no need to purify that which is without. Take care of the little things of life, and the great ones will take care of themselves, is the maxim of the trader, which is sometimes, and with a certain degree of truth, applied to the service of God. But much more true is it in religion that we should take care of the great things, and the trifles of life will take care of themselves. 'If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light<sup>4</sup>.'"

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> *St. Paul*, II, p. 236.

In the same spirit is conceived another passage on the same subject in the famous "Essay on Casuistry," which has sometimes been regarded as one of the very finest bits of work which the Master ever did :

"Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that scruples about lesser matters almost always involve some dereliction of duty in greater and more obvious ones. A tender conscience is a conscience unequal to the struggles of life. At first sight it seems as if, when lesser duties were cared for, the greater would take care of themselves. But this is not the lesson which experience teaches. In our moral as in our physical nature, we are finite beings, capable only of a certain degree of tension, ever liable to suffer disorder and derangement, to be over-exercised in one part and weakened in another. No one can fix his mind intently on a trifling scruple or become absorbed in an eccentric fancy, without finding the great principles of truth and justice insensibly depart from him. He has been looking through a microscope at life, and cannot take in its general scope. The moral proportions of things are lost to him ; the question of a new moon or a Sabbath has taken the place of diligence or of honesty. There is no limit to the illusions which he may practise on himself. There are those, all whose interests and prejudices at once take the form of duties and scruples, partly from dishonesty, but also from weakness, and because that is the form in which they can with the best grace maintain them against other men, and conceal their true nature from themselves<sup>1</sup>."

Twenty-six years later we hear the same warning voice ; the truth which it utters is at least as applicable to Judaism as to Christianity :

"Too strict a religion may be as harmful as too lax a one. For scruples may grow upon scruples until the unimportant takes the place of the important, and the whole gospel of Christ, the gospel of charity, of freedom, of truth, becomes absorbed in some question of vestments, or of position, or of the meaning of unintelligible words. We often talk of being on the safe side ; but there is a danger on both sides. We say it is better to believe too much than too little ; but the only safety is in the truth<sup>2</sup>."

In the same large and liberal spirit with which we are to order our own life, must we also judge the lives of others. The following passage from the sermon on "Going to Church," preached twenty-five years ago, still retains its truth :

"We do not mean to think better of ourselves because we attend the public worship of God, nor to divide men into good and bad according as they go to church or not. There are many in the present day who seem to be religious, and yet have no strong sense of right ; and there are many who have a strong sense of right, and yet have hardly any feeling of religion. We who meet here believe that we have a blessing and a good ; but we do not mean to condemn them, or to divide ourselves from them more than we are necessarily divided from them. We are not

<sup>1</sup> *St. Paul*, II, p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 228.



certain that their lives, their love of truth, their disinterestedness, their desire to do good to others, may not condemn us in the sight of God. There is no man who is leading a good life who is far from the kingdom of heaven. And we must allow for differences of character, for dislike of forms and conventionalities, for reaction against early education, and not demand of every one that they should conform to the same pattern. He who has the love of God and man inherent in his soul has the root of the matter in him; he who has any true love of man is not far from the love of God<sup>1</sup>."

One other more general passage may be quoted in which Jowett speaks as the wise counsellor to young men, and in which he shows how large, and joyous, and ideal was the religion which his teaching set before them. It is the conclusion to a sermon on "the Joys and Aspirations of Youth," of which the text had been the familiar verse in Ecclesiastes:

"And now for the words 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,' I will venture to substitute other words, 'Rejoice, whether young or old, in the service of God'; rejoice in the beauty of this world, in its fair scenes, in its great interests, in the hope and promise of knowledge. Rejoice in the thought of another life to which as we grow older we are drawing nearer. Rejoice in the companionship and affection of others, in the home to which no place can compare, in the friends whom nothing but death can part. Rejoice in the dead, more happy than the living, not as the Preacher says because they are without sense, but because 'they are in the hands of God, and there shall no evil touch them.' Rejoice in the work which God has given us to do here, knowing that it is his work, and the preparation for a higher, which we shall carry on far beyond what we are capable of thinking or imagining at present. Rejoice that we have got rid of the burden of selfishness, and egotism, and conceit, and those littlenesses and meannesses, which drag us down to earth, that our consciences are as the noonday clear, that we do not willingly allow ourselves in any sin. Rejoice that we are at peace, and can be resigned to the will of God, whatever it may have in store for us. Rejoice that we can live no longer for ourselves, but for God and our fellow men. Rejoice, too, in the truth, whatever that may be, which is slowly unveiling itself before our eyes, for God is truth, and every addition to truth is an addition to our knowledge of him. He will purge away the mists that environ us, and give us clearness, and 'the mind through all her powers irradiate.' Rejoice last of all in the love of Christ, who gave himself for us, and in the love of all other men who, bearing his image, have sacrificed themselves for the good of others. And, to sum up all, in the language of the apostle, 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice<sup>2</sup>.'"

One asks with interest whether this summons to rejoice implies that the Master was optimistically inclined as regards the future of

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

religion. On the whole it would seem that he was so; he believed in God too fervently not to believe that God's "kingdom" was "coming." But he was very cautious in prediction, for, as he was wont to say, "we cannot anticipate religious any more than political changes." The character of the future can only be imagined in general outline by the qualities and signs of the present. These qualities and signs comprise both evil and good. Throughout his life Jowett was keenly alive to both. With regard to the evil, it is curious to find him writing as early as 1849 in the following strain to Lord Lingem :

"It would be a strange thing to collect together all the evils that have sprung from religion, not merely from downright persecution, but from the prejudices and narrownesses which in the mass of men seem inseparable from it. How seldom you meet with a religious man who is quite sensible also—as politicians, most are almost insane. When anything touches the very name of religion, *εὐθὺς μάχεται* and becomes so stupefied and isolated in his prejudices, that it is impossible for him to understand the real state of the case. One cannot give up the hope of better things, but there is small sign of them at present<sup>1</sup>."

In the sermon on Bunyan and Spinoza, he complains that we are too wont to "revert to the follies of the past" instead of extracting its wisdom, "returning to antiquated practices and disused symbols" instead of attempting to translate the "higher purpose" of bygone centuries into the language and customs of our own. For :

"In religion we are always returning to the past, instead of starting from the past; learning nothing, forgetting nothing; trying to force back modern thought into the old conditions instead of breathing anew the spirit of Christ into an altered world<sup>2</sup>."

Occasionally he pours out his scorn upon Epicureanism and superstition together, and warns us that the human mind seems unable permanently to rid itself of either evil :

"We too have our popular Epicureanism, which would allow the world to go on as if there were no God. When the belief in him, whether of ancient or modern times, begins to fade away, men relegate him, either in theory or practice, into a distant heaven. They do not like expressly to deny God when it is more convenient to forget him; and so the theory of the Epicurean becomes the practice of mankind in general. Nor can we be said to be free from that which Plato justly considers to be the worst unbelief—of those who put superstition in the place of true religion. For the larger half of Christians continue to assert that the justice of God may be turned aside by gifts, and, if not by 'the odour of fat, and the sacrifice steaming to heaven,' still by another kind of sacrifice placed upon the altar—by masses for the quick and dead,

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, I, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 52.

by dispensations, by building churches, by rites and ceremonies—by the same means which the heathen used, taking other names and shapes. And the indifference of Epicureanism and unbelief is in two ways the parent of superstition, partly because it permits, and also because it creates, a necessity for its development in religious and enthusiastic temperaments. If men cannot have a rational belief, they will have an irrational. And hence the most superstitious countries are also at a certain point of civilization the most unbelieving, and the revolution which takes one direction is quickly followed by a reaction in the other<sup>1</sup>.”

Different aspects of the question float before his mind. Thus from a note-book of 1874 we get the following :

“In the present day there is not much to be done in getting rid of superstition ; everything to be done in the revival or construction of religion.

“Fifty years ago people, or at least some people, cared about their souls ; now they hardly know whether they have souls or not<sup>2</sup>.”

Such reflections must be read with the caution about which I spoke at the first. More frequently the Master touches on the hopeful signs of present-day religion. Even in 1855 and in 1860 he alludes to the dying down of controversy, to the softening of party spirit, to the decay of interest in minutiae or subtleties of dogma<sup>3</sup>. Again, people are beginning to look at religious differences from a more historical or psychological point of view :

“The characters of individuals and nations differ, and these differences enter into their religious beliefs. When men read history they find often that their position is the result of some accident or misfortune of the past, and this has a softening influence. And when they think of themselves and their brethren, as they are in the sight of God, they know that they are not really distinguished by the names which they bear in this world, but that in every nation and in every church he that doeth righteousness is accepted of him<sup>4</sup>.”

Again, he finds that “there is not so much party spirit” in religion “as formerly” (1878). “Men are beginning to get tired of it, and the world is rising up and protesting against the violence of the churches.”

“Christians are beginning to think of themselves more as they are in the sight of God, and less with reference to those envious lines of demarcation or external notes of difference which intersect Christian countries. . . . Men are beginning to feel as they put aside outward differences that nothing but a change of life and heart can make us acceptable to God<sup>5</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, V, p. ccvii.    <sup>2</sup> *Letters*, p. 243.    <sup>3</sup> *Cp. Essays and Reviews*, p. 421.

<sup>4</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 75.    *Cp.* p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Finally, as it seemed to Jowett, the antagonism between science and religion is passing away. "No man of sense can ever imagine" nowadays "that the inquiry into truth can be displeasing to the God of truth."

"The progress of science and knowledge (although this too, owing to the disproportion of the parts of knowledge, may have a temporary evil effect) has been an aid and support of the religion of Christ, and is gradually becoming incorporated with it, and more than any other cause has tended to purify it from narrowing and hurtful superstitions, which we easily recognize in other religions or in other forms of the Christian religion, not so easily in our own<sup>1</sup>."

So too, as we have already heard, the stumbling-block of miracles was, he believed, being gradually removed, and critical questions about the date and origin of Scripture, or about the truth of facts related in it, "are now regarded in a very different manner from formerly."

He is therefore led to anticipate that in the next generation—

"An historical age will have succeeded to a controversial one. Religious life will no longer be liable to be upset by small earthquakes, but will have a wider and deeper foundation. Good men of all parties will more and more see that so far as they had the spirit of God at all, they meant the same thing far more than they supposed<sup>2</sup>."

But Jowett was far from thinking that because a church or a religion may be more tolerant or more liberal, it is therefore necessarily better all round. "A church which is liberal may be also indifferent; having attained the form of truth, it may have lost the power of it. It may be sunk in rationalism and indifferentism, and never lift a hand for the improvement of mankind<sup>3</sup>." "In the love of truth" men may lose "sight of goodness<sup>4</sup>." Sometimes, as is natural to many men as they draw near old age, Jowett has his mood of anxiety and doubt:

"There is more toleration, more knowledge, than formerly; but is there the same heroism, the same self-sacrifice, the same intensity, the same elevation of character, the same aspiration after an ideal life, the same death to the world, the same continued struggle for the good of man? People ask, 'Who would be a martyr nowadays?' and the sting of the jest lies in the truth of it. For, indeed, we can scarcely imagine such a power of faith in our own age as would enable a man to give up not only his own preferment or means of livelihood, but life itself, in defence of some doctrine or principle. Nor do we see

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311 (1888).

<sup>3</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 296.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

around us that intense perception of the miseries of others which makes happiness impossible while they remain unrelieved. There is more good sense in the world, and greater material prosperity, and less of great evil, than formerly. But those higher types of character, which in former ages have guided and enlightened whole countries and communities, seem to us now further and further off, and with a diminished brightness, like the lights on the shore to the departing mariner<sup>1</sup>."

Still, on the whole, Jowett looks forward in some confidence to the future. In 1865 he writes to a friend :

"So far as religion has any dwelling-place on earth, I suppose we should rather, like the Jewish prophets, get the habit of looking onwards to the future and not backwards to the past. This would be a new kind of Millenarianism founded on fact and not on the interpretation of prophecy. All countries and all individuals hang to the past, but they seem hardly to think of the future ; and the tendency of the popular religion is to make us imagine that it will be at least as bad, if not worse than the present, and to be cured by the same fictitious remedies. The world are always being told that they are to make no progress in religion, and therefore they never do make any progress<sup>2</sup>."

Twenty-one years later he is still convinced of the future of *faith* :

"There is an immense place for faith in human life, but only for a faith which does not fight against experience: there is a faith in goodness, a faith in progress, in a Supreme Being, in the infinite longings and hopes which rise up in the human breast, which still remain and will remain as long as man exists upon the earth<sup>3</sup>."

Sometimes, in the manner of his favourite Baxter, he speaks under the guise of an old man who looks back and looks forward with equal moderation. "The older I get," he makes such a one say, "the more inclined I am to cling to a simple faith," and the less inclined to controversy.

"I know that in another world there can be no differences of parties in a church, no oppositions of theology and science, such as have separated us in this. When I think of these things, I sometimes feel that if I could have my life over again, I would join no party, enter into no controversy, but would seek only to awaken in members of the same church, or in different churches, and in all men everywhere, the love of truth for its own sake, the spirit of charity and mutual understanding<sup>4</sup>."

For :

"To follow Christ, to speak the truth in love, to do to others as you would they should do to you, these are the eternal elements of religion which can never pass away, and he who lives in these lives in God<sup>5</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, I, p. 372.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, p. 247.

<sup>4</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 272.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Or as he had already expressed it in the grand close to the "Essay on Atonement and Satisfaction" in the second edition of his book on St. Paul, a passage which is the more significant in view of the violent abuse which the first edition of the book had brought upon him :

"Who, as he draws near to Christ, will not feel himself drawn towards his theological opponents? At the end of life, when a man looks back calmly, he is most likely to find that he exaggerated in some things; that he mistook party spirit for a love of truth. Perhaps, he had not sufficient consideration for others, or stated the truth itself in a manner which was calculated to give offence. In the heat of the struggle, let us at least pause to imagine polemical disputes as they will appear a year, two years, three years hence; it may be, dead and gone—certainly more truly seen than in the hour of controversy. For the truths about which we are disputing cannot partake of the passing stir; they do not change even with the greater revolutions of human things. They are in eternity; and the image of them on earth is not the movement on the surface of the waters, but the depths of the silent sea. Lastly, as a measure of the value of such disputes, which above all other interests seem to have for a time the power of absorbing men's minds and rousing their passions, we may carry our thoughts onwards to the invisible world, and there behold, as in a glass, the great theological teachers of past ages, who have anathematized each other in their lives, resting together in the communion of the same Lord<sup>1</sup>."

Thus in its highest form religion will continue as long as man continues, and moreover of religion thus purified there can never be too much. This section of the *florilegium* may be concluded by a fine quotation from the introduction to the *Philebus*, in which the last idea is taken up and expanded :

"Religion, like happiness, is a word which has great influence apart from any consideration of its content; it may be for great good or for great evil. But true religion is the synthesis of religion and morality, beginning with divine perfection in which all human perfection is embodied. It moves among ideas of holiness, justice, love, wisdom, truth; these are to God, in whom they are personified, what the Platonic ideas are to the Idea of Good. It is the consciousness of the will of God that all men should be as he is. It lives in this world, and is known to us only through the phenomena of this world, but it extends to worlds beyond. Ordinary religion which is alloyed with motives of this world may easily be in excess, may be fanatical, may be interested, may be the mask of ambition, may be perverted in a thousand ways. But of that religion which combines the will of God with our highest ideas of truth and right there can never be too much. This impossibility of excess is the note of divine moderation<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul, II, p. 594.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, IV, p. 569.

I said at the beginning of these selections that one of the most striking and attractive features of Jowett's teaching was his combination of practical common sense with religious fervour. Urgent too as he was that his pupils should not lose themselves in idle dreaming, but that, resolutely learning to know themselves and the world, they should actually do the largest possible amount of useful work and actually live the best possible lives, he did not fail to point out that "common sense" has its limits, and that there exists a realm of value which the practical understanding could neither enter into nor deny.

It is curious to find the Master himself wondering whether he could do anything for the combination of piety and sense. Like the great man that he was, he did not realize that he could do, or had done, much.

Thus in a note of 1879 we get the following reflections :

"It is doubtful whether exaggerated books of piety, resting upon no knowledge of human life, can really do good. They neither enlarge, nor elevate, nor liberalize men's views of religion. They demand a perpetual strain upon the mind. A man is never to say, 'Thank God for guiding me in innocence through the day,' but, 'Forgive me for all my best deeds.' This tends to obliterate all distinction between right and wrong<sup>1</sup>.

"Would it be possible to combine in a manual of piety religious fervour with perfect good sense and knowledge of the world? This has never been attempted, and would be a work worthy of a great religious genius. . . .

"The debasement of the individual before the Divine Being is really a sort of Pantheism, so far that in the moral world God is everything and man nothing. But man thus debased before God is no proper or rational worshipper of him. There is a want of proportion in this sort of religion. God who is everything is not really so much as if he allowed the most exalted free agencies to exist side by side with him. The greater the beings under him, the greater he is.

"Is it possible for me, perhaps ten years hence, to write a new Thomas à Kempis, going as deeply into the foundations of human life, and yet not revolting the common sense of the nineteenth century by his violent contrast between this world and another?"

So too in his sermon on Wesley he suggests the thought that "there is religion enough in the world and good sense enough in the world, but that there has never been in the highest degree a union of the two<sup>2</sup>." While bidding his hearers beware of eccentricity, which has been "the ruin of many, and is the more dangerous for this very reason that no moral guilt attaches to it," he goes on to say :

"On the other hand it must be admitted that if a great religious movement were always governed by what educated men call good sense, if it

<sup>1</sup> This should be compared with the passage quoted on p. 347, giving the other side of the question.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, II, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 118.

waited for good sense and the approbation of sensible men, the world would have remained as it was from the beginning to the end."

This is a striking assertion, and perhaps not less striking is the thought that "it sometimes seems, even amid many follies, as if the good sense of religion were the only part of religion which survives in many of us." Noteworthy too are these serious questions and their replies:

"Was it eccentricity in Wesley to deprive himself of food that he might give to the poor? I dare not say yes, remembering who it was who taught, 'Go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor.' Was it eccentricity, again, to sacrifice his whole life to the salvation of his soul? Neither can this be maintained by any one who acknowledges as the author of his faith him who said, 'What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'"

From his earlier to his latest days the Master realized that human progress is not always on ordinary lines of gradual improvement; the student of human nature and the moralist must alike allow room for the facts of sudden changes and "conversion." Those who look on Jowett as the apostle of common sense and of nothing more should read the "Essay on Conversion and Changes of Character" in the *Epistles of St. Paul*. The following words are taken from it:

"No one with a heart open to human feelings, loving not man the less, but God more, sensitive to the happiness of this world, yet aiming at a higher—no man of such a nature ever made a great sacrifice, or performed a great act of self-denial, without impressing a change on his character, which lasted to his latest breath. No man ever took his besetting sin, it may be lust, or pride, or love of rank and position, and, as it were, cut it out by voluntarily placing himself where to gratify it was impossible, without sensibly receiving a new strength of character. In one day, almost in an hour, he may become an altered man; he may stand, as it were, on a different stage of moral and religious life; he may feel himself in new relations to an altered world<sup>2</sup>."

This was written in the fifties. Long afterwards, in the last year of his life, we find the following "note":

"It cannot be denied that at any minute of a man's life he may have the most exalted inspiration—that he may be willing to give all that he has and is, to sacrifice reputation, love, ambition, prospects of all kinds, to die without repining if it be the will of God, and that in this frame of mind he may continue for a considerable time with great satisfaction to himself. This is probably the experience of many, if not of all, good men. The moments in which we thus taste of the heavenly gift are the most precious of our lives, because they may be made permanent, and lead to everlasting consequences, although, like other feelings usually called love,

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *St. Paul*, II, p. 240.



they are apt to subside into commonplace. Yet it may very well be in either case, whether in the love which is spiritual or that which is sentimental, that the feeling is also lasting, and either lives always or is always reviving<sup>1</sup>."

Just as Jowett's own life was both practical and ideal, so also was his philosophy. His mistrust of any form of sensationalism or utilitarianism was largely influenced by its possible effects upon the actual lives of men. His own idealism comes out in his vivid appreciation of the idealism of others. There was no character in modern history for which he had a profounder appreciation than that of General Gordon. In a sermon on "War" preached in 1885 he devotes a few minutes to a fine portrayal of the Duke of Wellington, the "simplest and most truthful of men, in whom common sense was a kind of genius or inspiration." Then he goes on to speak of one "of whom all here are still thinking, the hero whose death has pierced the heart of a nation as if he had been personally known to every one of us."

"His character was of another sort, and his life was attuned to another and yet higher strain. The term 'good sense' could not with propriety be applied to him; rather he was like a prophet, newly inspired to give deliverance to the slave and the captive, and to reform the oppressions upon the earth. No one in our own day has ever set such an example of devotion to duty, to his country, and to God. He being dead, yet speaks to us; his life has been a help to many; and it may be that the remembrance of his name will restore peace and happiness to an oppressed country. The world thought him mad because he was not of the world. Men of his class, like the prophets and saints of old, are considered extravagant, partly because they take no thought for the morrow, what they shall eat or what they shall drink, or wherewithal they shall be clothed: living in the presence of the Eternal, they are really different from other men, and have their own ways of speaking and acting; partly because there is some weakness in human nature which at these heights seems incapable of sustaining itself, and mingles the fancies of the hour with everlasting truths<sup>2</sup>."

Jowett's idealism, though sometimes as with Plato veiled by a kind of irony<sup>3</sup>, finds noble utterance in the following passage from the introduction to the *Gorgias*. It was added in the third edition (1892):

"The martyr or sufferer in the cause of right or truth is often supposed to die in raptures, having his eye fixed on a city which is in heaven. But if there were no future, might he not still be happy in the performance of an action which was attended only by a painful death? He himself may be ready to thank God that he was thought worthy to do him

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> *Plato*, II, p. 302.

the least service, without looking for a reward ; the joys of another life may not have been present to his mind at all. Do we suppose that the mediaeval saint, St. Bernard, St. Francis, St. Catharine of Sienna, or the Catholic priest who lately devoted himself to death by a lingering disease that he might solace and help others, was thinking of the 'sweets' of heaven? No; the work was already heaven to him and enough. Much less will the dying patriot be dreaming of the praises of man or of an immortality of fame: the sense of duty, of right, and trust in God will be sufficient, and as far as the mind can reach, in that hour. If he were certain that there were no life to come, he would not have wished to speak or act otherwise than he did in the cause of truth or of humanity. Neither, on the other hand, will he suppose that God has forsaken him or that the future is to be a mere blank to him. The greatest act of faith, the only faith which cannot pass away, is his who has not known, but yet has believed. A very few among the sons of men have made themselves independent of circumstances, past, present, or to come. He who has attained to such a temper of mind has already present with him eternal life; he needs no arguments to convince him of immortality; he has in him already a principle stronger than death. He who serves man without the thought of reward is deemed to be a more faithful servant than he who works for hire. May not the service of God, which is the more disinterested, be in like manner the higher? And although only a very few in the course of the world's history—Christ himself being one of them—have attained to such a noble conception of God and of the human soul, yet the ideal of them may be present to us, and the remembrance of them be an example to us, and their lives may shed a light on many dark places both of philosophy and theology<sup>1</sup>."

On the same lines is the following short passage from the introduction to the *Republic*:

"The ideal must always be a paradox when compared with the ordinary conditions of human life. Neither the Stoical ideal nor the Christian ideal is true as a fact, but they may serve as a basis of education, and may exercise an ennobling influence. An ideal is none the worse because 'some one has made the discovery' that no such ideal was ever realized. And in a few exceptional individuals who are raised above the ordinary level of humanity, the ideal of happiness may be realized in death and misery. This may be the state which the reason deliberately approves, and which the utilitarian as well as every other moralist may be bound in certain cases to prefer<sup>2</sup>."

Though the following extract from the introduction to the *Theaetetus* belongs more properly to Jowett's ethical than to his religious teaching, it is so valuable in helping us to realize his idealistic point of view that I am tempted to transcribe it in full:

"As a lower philosophy is easier to apprehend than a higher, so a lower way of life is easier to follow; and therefore such a philosophy seems to derive

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, II, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, p. xxix.

a support from the general practice of mankind. It appeals to principles which they all know and recognize: it gives back to them in a generalized form the results of their own experience. To the man of the world they are the quintessence of his own reflections upon life. To follow custom, to have no new ideas or opinions, not to be straining after impossibilities, to enjoy to-day with just so much forethought as is necessary to provide for the morrow, this is regarded by the greater part of the world as the natural way of passing through existence. And many who have lived thus have attained to a lower kind of happiness or equanimity. They have possessed their souls in peace without ever allowing them to wander into the regions of religious or political controversy, and without any care for the higher interests of man. But nearly all the good (as well as some of the evil) which has ever been done in this world has been the work of another spirit, the work of enthusiasts and idealists, of apostles and martyrs. The leaders of mankind have not been of the gentle Epicurean type: they have personified ideas; they have sometimes also been the victims of them. But they have always been seeking after a truth or ideal of which they fell short; and have died in a manner disappointed of their hopes that they might lift the human race out of the slough in which they found them. They have done little compared with their own visions and aspirations; but they have done that little, only because they sought to do, and once perhaps thought that they were doing, a great deal more<sup>1</sup>."

There is another aspect of idealism with which Jowett was in sympathy: his leanings towards it would have to be carefully considered in any adequate estimate of his religious position. By that other aspect I mean—mysticism. We have already heard the passage from the 'Essay on Conversion' in which he says that "in prayer, as in all religion, there is something that it is impossible to describe," which can be felt but cannot be analysed, which is a "mystery that we do not need to fathom<sup>2</sup>." We remember his last thoughts on Plato, in which he expresses his conviction that "there are many more things in philosophy than can be expressed in words<sup>3</sup>." It is in the last edition of the *Plato*, moreover, that he says: "No one can duly appreciate the dialogues of Plato, especially the *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, and portions of the *Republic*, who has not a sympathy with mysticism." It is there that he defines mysticism to be "not the extravagance of an erring fancy, but the concentration of reason in feeling, the enthusiastic love of the good, the true, the one, the sense of the infinity of knowledge and of the marvel of the human faculties." "When feeding upon such thoughts," he adds—

"the 'wing of the soul' is renewed and gains strength; she is raised above 'the manikins of earth' and their opinions, waiting in wonder to

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, IV, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> *Plato*, V, p. ccxxxviii.

know, and working with reverence to find out what God in this or another life may reveal to her<sup>1</sup>."

Jowett seems to be expressing his own passionate belief that "this world is not all," as the familiar phrase runs, or more positively his belief in that ideal which most men call God (as well as in the impossibility of defining it more closely), when he elsewhere says :

"There are regions of speculation in which the negative is hardly separable from the positive, and even seems to pass into it. Not only Buddhism, but Greek as well as Christian philosophy, show that it is quite possible that the human mind should retain an enthusiasm for mere negations. In different ages and countries there have been forms of light in which nothing could be discerned and which have nevertheless exercised a life-giving and illumining power. For the higher intelligence of man seems to require, not only something above sense, but above knowledge, which can only be described as Mind or Being or Truth or God or the unchangeable and eternal element, in the expression of which all predicates fail and fall short. Eternity or the eternal is not merely the unlimited in time but the truest of all Being, the most real of all realities, the most certain of all knowledge, which we nevertheless only see through a glass darkly<sup>2</sup>."

The mystical element in Jowett's religious belief comes out clearly in this last passage. It must be reckoned with in considering the character and extent of his scepticism. A distinguished clergyman of the English Church who had several conversations with Jowett in the last two or three years of his life said to a friend of mine that the Master never seemed to allow his scepticism to extend to the "foundations of things"; he was sceptical about miracles and the specific dogmas of Christianity: but when this friend of my friend attempted to argue that it was logical to push scepticism still further, and to undermine Theism by the same methods as had been used for Christianity, then Jowett seemed to "shut up"; mankind could not endure a scepticism of that sort; God must remain. I doubt whether this is an accurate representation of Jowett's mind or point of view. The specific dogmas of Christianity rest upon the accuracy of a narrative in a book; this is not the case with the arguments for Theism. Moreover, the dogmas of Christianity depend upon miracles, but it cannot be said that with miracles Theism must stand and fall.

It is, however, true that Jowett has nowhere left us a reasoned defence of Theism. We have to remember that he never wrote any regular book or treatise upon theological matters after 1860. Again, as his biographer Dr. Evelyn Abbott has said, "his way of thinking was essentially unsystematic: he grasped truth intuitively, rather than discursively, vividly apprehending one aspect of it after another, but

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, I, p. 423.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, p. 398.

hardly making any effort to trace their logical connexion. . . . In his mind all systems of moral philosophy were but partial glimpses of the truth ; all were true, and all were imperfect, for each needed to be corrected and expanded by the other<sup>1</sup>." "He did not attempt to correlate his own ideas and bring them into a system." But it would be untrue to say that he did not face to the full the deepest problems of life. Above all he constantly sought to free himself from the dominion of words. He sought to use metaphysics to get rid of metaphysics, and was justly intolerant of those who thought that they could obtain the result without themselves going through the metaphysical mill. As Dr. Abbott says :

"His criticism was also a philosophy. It was not merely that he criticized systems and their founders ; he went deeper still, reaching down to the relation of language to thought, and of both to experience. He was wont to argue that any philosophy which neglects the study of language and the history of the mind is unsatisfactory. Words tend to outrun facts and become the symbols of ideas, which in their turn transcend experience. These dominate the mind and prevent it from seeing facts as they are<sup>2</sup>."

He saw not only that words such as "God" or "personality" mean different things or stand for different ideals to different persons, but that words which to some were cold and meaningless were to others full of significance and of power. I remember once in my undergraduate days reading an essay to him in which I said something rather foolish or slapdash about the absurdity or meaninglessness of an "unconscious God." Jowett at once interrupted me ; "Those words may have no meaning to you," he said, "they may mean a great deal to another."

There is a deeply interesting passage in his *Plato* which illustrates a good deal of what has here been said. There is also a long extract from a note-book of 1886 given in the *Life* which shows how calmly he faced and probed the deeper religious problems of the hour. It is necessary to quote this extract, but I think it must be read with caution. We must not suppose that, if Jowett did not believe in the personality of God in the old child-like sense, he therefore did not believe in the existence of goodness and reason over above and outside of man. In his picture of the "new Christianity" he is seeking to go as far as possible in religious development, and then to find out what remains and what is the difference. We must not pin him down to every single phrase as adequately representing his own complete and absolute belief.

"What is the possible limit of changes in the Christian religion ?

"1. The conception of miracles may become impossible and absurd.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 409.

"2. The hope of immortality may be only the present consciousness of goodness and of God.

"3. The personality of God, like the immortality of men, may pass into an idea.

"4. Every moral act may be acknowledged to have a physical antecedent."

"5. Doctrines may become unmeaning words.

"Yet the essence of religion may still be self-sacrifice, self-denial, a death unto life, having for its rule an absolute morality, a law of God and nature—a doctrine common to Plato and to the Gospel.

"The question arises, whether there can be any intellectual forms, in which this new Christianity will be presented:—

"1. The idea of God as goodness and wisdom, tending ever to realize itself in the world.

"2. The idea of the unity of man ever realizing itself more and more.

"3. The idea of law in the world answering ( $\alpha$ ) to resignation, ( $\beta$ ) to co-operation in the human mind.

"4. The abatement of self-assertion, and the acknowledgement that in some way there will be or has been a partaking of Christ's Kingdom.

"5. The sense that we know as much as Christ did, or might know, if we had given ourselves for men : *παθήματα μαθήματα*.

"6. Though we seem to be giving up a great deal, yet the orthodox view, when examined, contains no more than ours. Its God, and immortality, and human soul separated from the body are equally a negation, and equally a reality. Its only advantage is that it is in possession of a number of sacred names, which are also partly a hindrance to the true nature of religion.

"7. According to H. Spencer, religion has to do with the unknown. But this is only partly true: ( $\alpha$ ) the subject of religion is known as well as unknown, it is the ideal or aspiration of morality and politics; ( $\beta$ ) it is most important in relation to man, and in this field or region is perfectly well known; ( $\gamma$ ) it is not merely of the unknown, it is the upward, uncontrollable passion of human nature.

"8. The orthodox does not believe more than the unorthodox—the difference between them is one of temper and spirit. Neither St. Paul, nor Christ, really saw into a seventh heaven, or had any knowledge of a truth which can be described under the conditions of space and time different from our own. But they had a deeper and more intense conviction that all was well with them; that all things were working together for good; that mankind, if united to God and to one another, had the promise of the future in both worlds.

"9. The most instructive lesson of Buddhism and Taoism is that the negative may become positive; the smallness of the truth on which religion rests does not at all interfere with its infinite power.

"10. The nature of all religion is to be a growth from a small seed in the human heart, and in the world. Every one has this seed of immortality in himself, and can give it as much development as he pleases. And perhaps the more adverse his circumstances are, the more opportunity there is of this internal growth. . . .

*"The Two Great Forms of Religion."*

"I. The sense and practice of the presence of God, the sight of him, and the knowledge of him as the great overruling law of progress in the world, whether personal or impersonal; the sympathy and the harmony of the physical and the moral, and of something unknown which is greater than either; the God of truth in the dealings of men with one another, and in the universe, the ideal to which all men are growing.

"The best of humanity is the most perfect reflection of God; humanity as it might be, not as it is; and the way up to him is to be found in the lives of the best and greatest men; of saints and legislators and philosophers, the founders of states, and the founders of religions—allowing for, and seeking to correct their necessary oneness. These heroes, or demi-gods, or benefactors, as they would have been called by the ancients, are the mediators between God and man. Whither they went we also are going, and may be content to follow in their footsteps.

"We are always thinking of ourselves, hardly ever of God, or of great and good men who are his image. This egotism requires to be abated before we can have any real idea of his true nature. The 'I' is our God—What we shall eat? What we shall drink? What we shall do? How we shall have a flattering consciousness of our own importance? There is no room left for the idea of God, and law, and duty.

"II. The second great truth of religion is resignation to the great facts of the world and of life. In Christianity we live, but Christianity is fast becoming one religion among many. We believe in a risen Christ, not risen, however, in the sense in which a drowning man is restored to life, nor even in the sense in which a ghost is supposed to walk the earth, nor in any sense which we can define or explain. We pray to God as a person, a larger self; but there must always be a *subintelligitur* that he is not a person. Our forms of worship, public and private, imply some interference with the course of nature. We know that the empire of law permeates all things.

"You impose upon us with words; you deprive us of all our hopes, joys, motives; you undermine the foundations of morality."

"No! there is no greater comfort, no stronger motive than the knowledge of things as they truly are, apart from illusions and pretences, and conventions, and theological formulas. 'Be not deceived,' God is not other than he is seen to be in this world, if we rightly understand the indications which he gives of himself. Highest among these indications is the moral law, which exists everywhere and among all men in some degree; and to which there is no limit, nor ever will be, while the world lasts; the least seed of moral truth possessing an infinite potentiality, and this inspiration for the idea is strengthened and cherished by the efforts of a holy and devoted life, which appears to be the greatest moral power in the world.

"Anybody who gives himself up for the good of others, who takes up his cross, will find heaven on this earth, and will trust God for all the rest.

"Anybody who accepts facts as they truly are, and in proportion to his knowledge of them, will have no more doubts and difficulties, and reconciliations of science and religion, or inquiries about the date and authorship of the Gospels. To him the historical character of these and other ancient writings sinks into insignificance in comparison with their moral value<sup>1</sup>."

The passage in the *Plato* to which I have alluded occurs in the introduction to the *Parmenides*, and forms part of what may be described as a little essay on the relation of language to thought. Jowett there shows how both "common sense" and philosophy (and "common sense" more than philosophy) have often become the slaves of words, the various meanings and history of which they have not adequately investigated. Terms such as "development, evolution, law, and the like are constantly put in the place of facts, even by writers who profess to base truth entirely upon fact." Thinkers are partly deceived by their mental creations:

"Theology, again, is full of undefined terms which have distracted the human mind for ages. Mankind have reasoned from them, but not to them; they have drawn out the conclusions without examining the terms. The passions of religious parties have been roused to the utmost about words of which they could have given no explanation, and which had really no distinct meaning. One sort of them, faith, grace, justification, have been the symbols of one class of disputes; as the words substance, nature, person, of another; revelation, inspiration, and the like, of a third. All of them have been the subject of endless reasonings and inferences; but a spell has hung over the minds of theologians or philosophers which has prevented them from examining the words themselves. Either the effort to rise above and beyond their own first ideas was too great for them, or there might, perhaps, have seemed to be an irreverence in doing so. About the Divine Being himself, in whom all true theological ideas live and move, men have spoken and reasoned much, and have fancied that they instinctively know him. But they hardly suspect that under the name of God even Christians have included two characters or natures as much opposed as the good and evil principle of the Persians<sup>2</sup>."

But just as Plato even while criticizing his own doctrine of "universals" is not a sceptic, so it was also with Jowett. Because he knew "that the powers of language are very unequal to the subtlety of nature or of mind," he did not therefore "renounce the use of them." Because words cannot fully represent realities, we do not therefore deny the existence of these realities themselves. Because we do not understand or grasp them fully, that does not show that they have less reality than we had before supposed, but rather that they have more. If God is not self-conscious, in our human sense, it is not because he is

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 311-314.

<sup>2</sup> *Plato*, IV, p. 41.



less than conscious, but because he is more. Such seems to be the ruling idea of the next two paragraphs, in which, more than in any other passage, Jowett's deepest ideas about the nature of the Divine Being are adequately and clearly conveyed to us:

"So the human mind makes the reflection that God is not a person like ourselves—is not a cause like the material causes in nature, nor even an intelligent cause like a human agent—nor an individual, for he is universal; and that every possible conception which we can form of him is limited by the human faculties. We cannot by any effort of thought or exertion of faith be in and out of our minds at the same instant. How can we conceive him under the forms of time and space, who is out of time and space? How get rid of such forms and see him as he is? How can we imagine his relation to the world or to ourselves? Innumerable contradictions follow from either of the two alternatives, that God is or that he is not. Yet we are far from saying that we know nothing of him, because all that we know is subject to the conditions of human thought. To the old belief in him we return, but with corrections. He is a person, but not like ourselves; a mind, but not a human mind; a cause, but not a material cause, nor yet a maker or artificer. The words which we use are imperfect expressions of his true nature; but we do not therefore lose faith in what is best and highest in ourselves and in the world.

"‘A little philosophy takes us away from God; a great deal brings us back to him.’ When we begin to reflect, our first thoughts respecting him and ourselves are apt to be sceptical. For we can analyse our religious as well as our other ideas; we can trace their history; we can criticize their perversion; we see that they are relative to the human mind and to one another. But when we have carried our criticism to the furthest point, they still remain, a necessity of our moral nature, better known and understood by us, and less liable to be shaken, because we are more aware of their necessary imperfection. They come to us with ‘better opinion, better confirmation,’ not merely as the inspirations either of ourselves or of another, but deeply rooted in history and in the human mind<sup>1</sup>."

It is not the object of this *florilegium* to attempt to set forth the complete religious position which is to be elicited from these and other extracts: rather are the extracts to be allowed to speak for themselves. If they possess a meaning and a value to the reader at all comparable to what they possess to the collector of them in this place, it would be wholly unnecessary to say a word more in their elucidation or their praise. I will, therefore, pass on at once to the last subject with which I propose to deal, and will give some quotations in respect to the Master's views upon the Immortality of the Soul.

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, IV, p. 43.

His mature belief is aptly summed by Dr. Abbott when he says of him :

"To some it might seem a contradiction that one who refused to 'envisage' a future life in any form conceivable to man should maintain, with an almost passionate intensity of belief that the souls of the departed 'are with God,' 'that this world cannot be all'; but such was Jowett's nature<sup>1</sup>."

No saying was more frequently in his mind and on his lips than the great verse in the Wisdom of Solomon: "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God: there shall no evil touch them." The exquisite letters of condolence which he wrote to friends in their bereavement usually contained the words: "He is with God, where we too soon shall be." The dead are nearer God than we are, so he believed, and all is well with them, in some higher and better sense than that they sleep for ever. Nevertheless, inconsistent as it may seem to many, in any "reunion" in a meeting again and in a recognition, he personally did not believe. And yet in some sense or other the "I" is to continue.

Let me start the quotations by the following passage from a notebook, of which the date is given as 1878:

*"The future life."*

"The difficulty is how to describe this as indefinite but as real.

"At sixty years of age how do I feel about it, not only with respect to myself, but with respect to the uneducated, my old servant—the other good old man who waits on me here at Malvern?

"I want to finish three works besides those which I have in hand:—

"1. Introductory volume on Greek Philosophy.

"2. Commentary on three first Gospels and Epistles.

"3. Treatise on Moral Philosophy.

"But I would not like to think that this, even if I accomplish it all, is my whole work in life. Yet I can imagine nothing beyond. Still I believe (1) that here my work will be carried on by others; (2) that there I shall myself carry on another work.

"A future life has hitherto been a sham or a convention, shocking to doubt, but having no real basis. Who can wonder that such a sham cannot maintain itself against the influence of the nineteenth century?

"Two things have been unfavourable to a belief in a future life:—

"1. The want of inductive evidence for it, which there neither is nor ever will be.

"2. The want of modes in which it may be conceived; these there neither are nor ever will be.

"The belief in a future life arises out of our belief in ideas, especially in moral ideas. It can only have its roots in morality, and must therefore be chiefly asserted by character. Without the belief in a future life moral ideas vanish and disappear<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, p. 245.

The general lines of his belief are here clearly laid down. I will next take a few references in his letters. Thus for instance in 1874 he writes to an intimate friend :

"The two brothers are at rest now. Whether they recognize one another or whether we shall recognize others in another life we cannot tell. I cannot believe myself in consolations of this sort. They are removed from our sight, and are in the hands of God, where we shall soon be. We must leave them with him, though often recalling their gracious and noble ways when they were with us<sup>1</sup>."

In 1886 he alludes to the many great losses he himself had recently undergone :

"They are such friends as cannot be replaced. They are with the unseen, in the hands of God, and I shall soon be with them. I do not expect ever to meet them again ; that may afford comfort to some, but not to me, though I trust in God that with me, as with them, it may be well<sup>2</sup>."

In 1890 he writes :

"We cannot see into another life, but we believe with an inextinguishable hope that there is something still reserved for us<sup>3</sup>."

In 1892 he writes about friends who have "gone before" :

"They have gone where we shall go, and, as we hope, we shall still be in the hands of God, as they are, in another state of being<sup>4</sup>."

From a note-book of 1882 we are given the following :—

"The more we think of reason as the highest thing in the world, and of man as a rational being, the more disposed we shall be to think of human beings as immortal. We cannot set limits to this, nor say : 'What human beings?' or 'What immortality?' Whether in another life the servant shall be equal to the master, the child to the grown-up man, the fool to the philosopher, the Hottentot to the Englishman ; whether animals will have a share in the happiness of men ; whether the common moral qualities of men shall be the essence of future existence ; whether any of us will know one another—of all this we have no means of judging or speaking<sup>5</sup>."

It was natural that in the sermons in which Jowett spoke about his departed friends—such as those on Henry Smith, on T. H. Green, on Hugh Pearson, or on Lewis Nettleship—he should touch again and again on this same solemn and fascinating subject. For instance :

"He is with God, where we too shall be, some of us, in no long time—most of us are still young and have the work of life before them. There is no need to enlarge further on the circumstances of our dear friend's

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, II, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 382.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

end. All death is sad, but the time and the manner of it do not make much difference. All death is rest and peace, deliverance from sin and sorrow—yes, and from our own selves, or from the worst part of us, that the better may remain. ‘The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and there shall no evil touch them’<sup>1</sup>.”

This was about Nettleship. No less beautiful are two passages in the sermons on Green and Henry Smith. The first runs thus:

“We see indeed a great light, but objects are not discernible in it. We cannot say what our friends are doing; what thoughts are passing through their minds; what realities are present to them. We do not wish to rest in external facts, or to put together figures of speech. The life of Christ, the lives of saints and prophets, the lives of all seekers after God and the truth, the higher witness of our own souls,—these all testify to us of a world beyond, and we leave the rest with Him<sup>2</sup>.”

This is the close of the sermon on Henry Smith, the great mathematician:

“And so we say farewell to him who was the dear friend of some here present. He has passed into the unseen world, where we can no longer follow: ‘We shall go to him, but he shall not return to us.’ Yet we may be allowed to think of him as in the presence of God, with whom is the fountain of light, and in whom the parts of knowledge which we see through a glass darkly, the laws of nature, the truths of figures and numbers, the ideas of justice, love, and truth, which are his attributes, are beheld face to face. But there is no tongue of man or of angels in which such things can be expressed. We meditate on the infinite possibilities of another life, and are silent<sup>3</sup>.”

The most systematic and elaborate writing which Jowett ever put forth on the Immortality of the Soul is contained in his introduction to the *Phaedo*. There we have what is virtually a long essay on the subject. Before coming to that essay there are two short passages elsewhere in the *Plato* which demand our attention. Both are the more noteworthy as they form part of the additions to the book in the third edition, published a year before the Master's death. The first of these two passages occurs in the added reflections upon Psychology appended to the introduction to the *Theaetetus*. He is speaking of the various subjects or divisions of Psychology, and ends thus:

“At the other end of the ‘globus intellectualis,’ nearest, not to earth and sense, but to heaven and God, is the personality of man, by which he holds communion with the unseen world. Somehow, he knows not how, somewhere, he knows not where, under this higher aspect of his being he grasps the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality; he sees

<sup>1</sup> *College Sermons*, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

the forms of truth, holiness, and love, and is satisfied with them. No account of the mind can be complete which does not admit the reality or the possibility of another life. Whether regarded as an ideal or as a fact, the highest part of man's nature, and that in which it seems most nearly to approach the divine, is a phenomenon which exists, and must therefore be included within the domain of psychology<sup>1</sup>."

The other passage looks at the matter from an ethical or practical point of view, and connects the hope of individual immortality with the ideal of the future of the human race upon the earth. It runs thus :

"Two other ideals, which never appeared above the horizon in Greek Philosophy, float before the minds of men in our own day : one seen more clearly than formerly, as though each year and each generation brought us nearer to some great change ; the other almost in the same degree retiring from view behind the laws of nature, as if oppressed by them, but still remaining a silent hope of we know not what hidden in the heart of man. The first ideal is the future of the human race in this world ; the second, the future of the individual in another. The first is the more perfect realization of our own present life ; the second, the abnegation of it : the one, limited by experience, the other, transcending it. Both of them have been and are powerful motives of action ; there are a few in whom they have taken the place of all earthly interests. The hope of a future for the human race at first sight seems to be the more disinterested, the hope of individual existence the more egotistical, of the two motives. But when men have learnt to resolve their hope of a future either for themselves or for the world into the will of God—'not my will but Thine,' the difference between them falls away ; and they may be allowed to make either of them the basis of their lives, according to their own individual character or temperament. There is as much faith in the willingness to work for an unseen future in this world as in another. Neither is it inconceivable that some rare nature may feel his duty to another generation, or to another century, almost as strongly as to his own, or that living always in the presence of God, he may realize another world as vividly as he does this<sup>2</sup>."

The essay on "the Immortality of the Soul," which forms a part of the introduction to the *Phaedo*, occupies thirteen pages of small print and obviously cannot here be given in full. I can only attempt a short analysis, together with a few selected quotations.

The essay begins with an acknowledgement that many bad arguments have been used to "prove" Immortality. Moreover "the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul has sunk deep into the heart of the human race ; and men are apt to rebel against an examination of the nature or grounds of their belief." Nevertheless we must not refuse to examine the subject anew. We must be willing to realize

<sup>1</sup> *Plato*, IV, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, p. ccxxx.

that this idea, like the idea of God, "has a history in time," and "we must not become misologists because arguments are apt to be deceivers." No wonder indeed that "modern philosophy is perplexed at the whole question" or that it is inclined to give it up and hand it over "to the realm of faith." What idea can we have of the soul apart from the body? Endless variations of the problem can be suggested. If there is immortality, what is that which is immortal? Is it any personal element? is it a "principle of knowledge or of goodness, or the union of the two"? Moral questions also crop up. What about evil? "The annihilation of evil at death, or the eternal duration of it, seem to involve great difficulties in the moral government of the world." Will only the wise and good survive? That cannot be: "all or none will be partakers of immortality." The bad need another life more than the good; "not that they may be punished, but that they may be educated." Then there is the puzzle about the animals. "Have we not seen dogs more faithful and intelligent than men, and men who are more stupid and brutal than any animals?" But these and similar questions are brushed away. We must not seek to carry logic too far; when we reason on these subtleties, "almost at once we degenerate into nonsense."

Again, what do we mean by the word immortality? We can form no idea of "endless time," and the common conceptions of "heaven" and "hell" are mere rhetoric. The essayist has a few biting sarcasms upon theories of eternal damnation, invented by "so-called Christian teachers." He does not believe in the influence of the joys of heaven or the terrors of hell over the lives of men. "Another life must be described, if at all, in forms of thought and not of sense." "The truest conception which we can form of a future life is a state of progress or education—a progress from evil to good, from ignorance to knowledge." There is a reasonable argument from analogy of the present life and of the probable future of human life upon the earth. If God rules this world on the lines of law and of gradual progress, we may argue that law and progress will be the "governing principles of another<sup>1</sup>." And if it be said that we cannot reason from the seen to the unseen, and that we must not, by seductive analogy, create another world after the image of this, then, like Plato, we can adduce other arguments as well:

"For we feel that the soul partakes of the ideal and invisible; and can never fall into the error of confusing the external circumstances of man with his higher self; or his origin with his nature. It is as repugnant to us as it was to Plato to imagine that our moral ideas are to be attributed only to cerebral forces. The value of a human soul, like the value of a man's life to himself, is inestimable, and cannot be reckoned in earthly or material things. The human being alone has the conscious-

ness of truth and justice and love, which is the consciousness of God. And the soul becoming more conscious of these, becomes more conscious of her own immortality."

Hence we rest in this: "The last ground of our belief in immortality, and the strongest, is the perfection of the divine nature." If God is "perfect he must will that all rational beings should partake of that perfection, which he himself is. In the words of the *Timæus*, he is good, and therefore he desires that all other things should be as like himself as possible. And the manner in which he accomplishes this is by permitting evil, or rather degrees of good, which are otherwise called evil. For all progress is good relatively to the past, and yet may be comparatively evil when regarded in the light of the future. Good and evil are relative terms, and degrees of evil are merely the negative aspect of degrees of good."

In its first published form the essay concluded with these words:

"Thus the belief in the immortality of the soul rests at last on the belief in God. If there is a good and wise God, then there is a progress of mankind towards perfection; and if there is no progress of men towards perfection, then there is no good and wise God. We cannot suppose that the moral government of God of which we see the beginnings in the world and in ourselves will cease when we pass out of life."

Jowett, as we have seen, was continually pondering upon the subject of immortality. Immersed as he was in "mundane" affairs, his mind was constantly moving in the realms of the ideal. So in the third edition of the *Plato*, he not only added suggestive sentences to his essay here and there (all well worthy of study), but appended to it five new paragraphs, in which, as it seems to me, his deepest and maturest thoughts upon immortality are most adequately conveyed. I will venture to quote them in full:

"Considering the 'feebleness of the human faculties and the uncertainty of the subject,' we are inclined to believe that the fewer our words the better. At the approach of death there is not much said; good men are too honest to go out of the world professing more than they know. There is perhaps no important subject about which, at any time, even religious people speak so little to one another. In the fullness of life the thought of death is mostly awakened by the sight or recollection of the death of others rather than by the prospect of our own. We must also acknowledge that there are degrees of the belief in immortality, and many forms in which it presents itself to the mind. Some persons will say no more than that they trust in God, and that they leave all to him. It is a great part of true religion not to pretend to know more than we do. Others when they quit this world are comforted with the hope 'that they will see and know their friends in heaven.' But it is better to leave them in the hands of God, and to be assured that 'no evil shall

touch them.' There are others again to whom the belief in a divine personality has ceased to have any longer a meaning; yet they are satisfied that the end of all is not here, but that something still remains to us, 'and some better thing for the good than for the evil.' They are persuaded, in spite of their theological nihilism, that the ideas of justice and truth and holiness and love are realities. They cherish an enthusiastic devotion to the first principles of morality. Through these they see, or seem to see, darkly, and in a figure, that the soul is immortal.

"But besides differences of theological opinion, which must ever prevail about things unseen, the hope of immortality is weaker or stronger in men at one time of life than at another; it even varies from day to day. It comes and goes; the mind, like the sky, is apt to be overclouded. Other generations of men have sometimes lived under an 'eclipse of faith'; to us the total disappearance of it might be compared to the 'sun falling from heaven.' And we may sometimes have to begin again and acquire the belief for ourselves; or to win it back again when it is lost. It is really weakest in the hour of death. For Nature, like a kind mother or nurse, lays us to sleep without frightening us; physicians, who are the witnesses of such scenes, say that under ordinary circumstances there is no fear of the future. Often, as Plato tells us, death is accompanied 'with pleasure.' When the end is still uncertain, the cry of many a one has been, 'Pray that I may be taken.' The last thoughts even of the best men depend chiefly on the accidents of their bodily state. Pain soon overpowers the desire of life; old age, like the child, is laid to sleep almost in a moment. The long experience of life will often destroy the interest which mankind have in it. So various are the feelings with which different persons draw near to death, and still more various the forms in which imagination clothes it.

"When we think of God and of man in his relation to God; of the imperfection of our present state and yet of the progress which is observable in the history of the world and of the human mind; of the depth and power of our moral ideas, which seem to partake of the very nature of God himself; when we consider the contrast between the physical laws to which we are subject, and the higher law which raises us above them and is yet a part of them; when we reflect on our capacity of becoming the 'spectators of all time and all existence,' and of framing in our own minds the ideal of a perfect Being; when we see how the human mind in all the higher religions of the world, including Buddhism, notwithstanding aberrations, has tended towards such a belief—we have reason to think that our destiny is different from that of animals; and though we cannot altogether shut out the childish fear that the soul upon leaving the body may 'vanish into thin air,' we have still, so far as the nature of the subject admits, a hope of immortality with which we comfort ourselves on sufficient grounds. The denial of the belief takes the heart out of human life; it lowers men to the level of the material. As Goethe also says, 'He is dead even in this world who has no belief in another.'

"It is well also that we should sometimes think of the forms of thought under which the idea of immortality is most naturally presented to us.



It is clear that to our minds the risen soul can no longer be described, as in a picture, by the symbol of a creature half-bird, half-human, nor in any other form of sense. The multitude of angels, as in Milton, singing the Almighty's praises, are a noble image, and may furnish a theme for the poet or the painter, but they are no longer an adequate expression of the kingdom of God which is within us. Neither is there any mansion, in this world or another, in which the departed can be imagined to dwell and carry on their occupations. When this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, no other habitation or building can take them in ; it is in the language of ideas only that we speak of them.

"First of all there is the thought of rest and freedom from pain ; they have gone home, as the common saying is, and the cares of this world touch them no more. Secondly, we may imagine them as they were at their best and brightest, humbly fulfilling their daily round of duties—selfless, childlike, unaffected by the world ; when the eye was single and the whole body seemed to be full of light ; when the mind was clear and saw into the purposes of God. Thirdly, we may think of them as possessed by a great love of God and man, working out his will at a further stage in the heavenly pilgrimage. And yet we acknowledge that these are the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and therefore it hath not entered into the heart of man in any sensible manner to conceive them. Fourthly, there may have been some moments in our own lives when we have risen above ourselves, or been conscious of our truer selves, in which the will of God has superseded our wills, and we have entered into communion with him, and been partakers for a brief season of the divine truth and love, in which like Christ we have been inspired to utter the prayer, 'I in them, and thou in me, that we may be all made perfect in one.' These precious moments, if we have ever known them, are the nearest approach which we can make to the idea of immortality<sup>1</sup>."

I do not propose to sum up or discuss these utterances. Let them speak for themselves. So too about the entire number of extracts in this whole *florilegium* : let them speak for themselves. Perhaps they cannot produce quite the same effect upon those who have not felt the power of the Master's personality, who have not seen him, and heard him, and talked with him about religion and life. That is inevitable, but even these mere extracts may enable some persons to understand what the force of this personality must actually have been. I will not discuss the question whether the Master was or was not a Christian in any stricter sense of the word. Whether he was or was not, it may in either case be argued that the main tenor of his teaching was in harmony and agreement with a progressive and enlightened Judaism. It can be translated, and it needs to be translated, into Jewish. Very imperfectly and stumblingly I have sought to do this from time to time.

It may be asked, what did Jowett himself think of Judaism and of

<sup>1</sup> Plato, II, pp. 170-182.

its chances in the modern and western World? In the fifties we can see from the book on St. Paul that he still shared many of the prejudices which his Evangelical associations and education had brought with them. He clearly knew nothing about modern Judaism, and had never talked with educated and liberal Jews. But these limitations entirely passed away. He made many Jewish friends, and learnt more about what Judaism really stood for. He often spoke to me on the subject; we talked about the chances of Reform, about the best way of liberalizing the synagogue, about the right attitude of Judaism to the New Testament, and so on. I have still by me a few rough notes of some of these conversations, but I hesitate to quote from them, lest I should have inadequately expressed the Master's words. His line usually was that one of the best methods of Reform was to soften people's prejudices in as gentle a way as possible. Show, for instance, "that Judaism is not the only religion; each religion has its function and truth, and the one may be a complement for the other." National limitations in the Jewish religion may in many persons be intimately connected with the moral and religious truths which a reformer would most wish to maintain. Hence, one must deal with them gently. For religions cannot easily be tribal in any objectionable sense nowadays. "There is gradually forming a common stock of religious truth for all of us, composed of what is best in all religions—a common ideal of purity and goodness." "It may sometimes be necessary," he said, "to show people that their opinions are wrong," but it is usually "a mistake to quarrel." All people, whether Jews or Christians, dislike being rationalized. You can only lead them to higher conceptions, to prefer truth to tradition, the spirit to the letter, by appealing to their better feelings, and to the highest side of their nature. Best of all is the self-devoted life, which makes itself felt, and gradually influences, by doing good. In this age we cannot easily separate religious good from secular good, nor the religious life from the secular life. Doing good to Jews does good to Judaism. Silent work where there is least opposition is the best work.

Sometimes also, in rare and treasured letters, the Master would jot down his opinions about Judaism and kindred matters. The following was written to me in 1882, and perhaps illustrates the almost exaggerated value which Jowett attached to organization and system :

"The difficulty of Reformers is how to attach themselves rightly to the Old. In some imaginary dream of liberty they cut the cord and find themselves helpless and isolated. The Jewish problem is not really different from that of other religions : they all belong to a former age, and they have separated themselves from one another by outward tradition. But that is no reason why they should not have the same reformed

spiritual and moral faith, while in lesser matters they are determined by country, habit, or education. The power of any man to do good in the Christian or Jewish Church depends upon his reconciliation of these two elements."

With these words we may compare the close of a sermon preached in the following year in the Abbey :

"We may be sure of this, that without organization, without system, without a local habitation, any Christian effort, however disinterested or noble, will soon pass away and leave no trace. And on the other hand mere organization, the outward and visible Church or other institution, continues indeed, but has only a mechanical and unmeaning existence. It is vain to expect that men can be made better, unless we can speak to them heart to heart ; giving to them higher conceptions of God and of the truth, and a deeper sense of their duties to one another. It is vain to suppose that they will listen to a religion of which any part is at variance with their own conscience, or with common sense, or with the morality of the age in which they live. They need something higher, holier, better ; and this better thing for which they ask is the revelation of a divine perfection in which all the elements of earthly goodness are realized and fulfilled<sup>1</sup>."

The last letter which I ever received from Jowett was written in January, 1893—he died in the following October—and relates to my Hibbert Lectures, which had just come out. It is a highly characteristic letter ; one part of it seems almost painfully prophetic :

"I write to thank you for your book, of which I have read a considerable part. . . . I doubt whether you and others can have sufficient data for determining the times of books and events, but I have no right to raise questions, because I am ignorant of the subject. Yet I think that we must ultimately be satisfied with a much greater degree of uncertainty which no further investigation can ever really dispel. . . .

"It appears to me that there is a great work to be done in Judaism. Christianity has gone forward : ought not Judaism to make a similar progress from the letter to the spirit, from the national and the historical to the ideal ? The Jews need not renounce the religion of their fathers, but they ought not to fall short of the highest, whether gathered from the teaching of Jesus or from Greek philosophy.

"Did you ever think of devoting yourself to the Jewish race as the task of your life ? First as a student, bringing before them and impressing upon them the best of what they have, either in the Scriptures or among the Rabbis and other great Hebrew teachers. Secondly, by endeavouring to raise the manners and ways of their preachers and education. Their condition in Europe is at present a very sad one, and may become a very terrible one, at least on the continent.

"I hope you will come and see me from time to time and talk about such matters which interest me very greatly. I should never attempt

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 298.

to convert a Jew from one form of religion to another. But I think that all persons are greatly the better for having a universal form of religion as well as a national and particular one."

If the teaching of Jowett can be adapted to Judaism as well as to Christianity, and can be adopted by both, the gain is clear. In any case it forms a link between the two, and it may induce the disciples of one faith the better to appreciate the other. If, on the other hand, it cannot finally consort with dogmatic Christianity or with dogmatic Judaism, it may nevertheless indicate the lines of a liberal form of either creed, or it may point forward to a more comprehensive religion of the future, which, under whatever name or label, may include an increasing number of seekers after God.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.

## STROPHIC FORMS IN ISAIAH XLVII.

DR. PAUL RUBEN has published in this REVIEW (XI, pp. 431-479) an inquiry on "Strophic Forms in the Bible," in connexion with my book on *Die Propheten in ihrer ursprünglichen Form*. I have no intention of entering here upon a criticism of that essay. The points of difference between us were put by Dr. Ruben in a full light. On the whole, I take up the same standpoint as before; I do not care, at present, to discuss the matter, and refute myself objections that were expressed in rather too strong terms. But I cannot refrain from observing that I often made conjectures in my book, and also accepted such as were made by others, but certainly not to the extent that this was done by Dr. Ruben; further, I can admit only in a very few cases that the conjectures as a whole, and especially those of Dr. Ruben, were "an outcry of common sense." Besides, Dr. Ruben might have made more use of my new essay on *Strophenbau und Responsion* than he has done.

If however we differ much on points of detail, he has yet, avowedly, based his remarks upon my work, and simply accepted a number of my propositions; and I admit having myself also received many useful hints from his essay. I will show this by an instance from Isaiah xlvi. As a whole, I adhere to my former division of the passage; but, on various minor points, I partly accept Dr. Ruben's suggestions, and partly propose some fresh ones, induced thereto by Dr. Ruben's remarks.